Effect of an Obesity Prevention Program on Lifestyle Behaviors in Arab American Children

Lena Qasem, BSN, RN  Cheryl Holly, EdD, RN, ANEF, FNAP & Kimberly Dimino, DNP, RN, CCRN

Introduction
• Childhood obesity is one of the most prevalent dilemmas in the United States.
• Childhood obesity is preventable
• It is essential to implement obesity prevention programs to prevent childhood obesity.

Background and Significance
• About 1 in 5 children are obese
• Obesity can lead to emotional, social, and health problems.
• These health consequences include chronic illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, and specific types of cancer.
• $14.3 billion US dollars spent annually on childhood obesity.
• Essential causes of obesity include:
  • A diet high in fats and sugars
  • Decreased levels of physical activity

Methods
• Design of Project: Pré- and post-test one group interventional design
• Setting: Palestinian American Community Center in Clifton, NJ
• Study Population: Arab-American children ages 8 – 11 years who speak English. A total of 7 participants.
• Project Intervention: Just for Kids! five-week program focused on diet and physical activity
• Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data of the pre and post questionnaires.
• A paired-sample t-test was used to compare pre- to post-intervention changes in dietary choices and physical activity levels.
• A significance level of 0.05 was used in analyzing the data.

Results
• All participants showed an increased score on the post-nutrition questionnaire compared to the pre-nutrition questionnaire score.
• There was a statistical significance between pre-nutrition and post- nutrition interventions.
• All participants but one showed a decrease in score for post-physical activity questionnaire compared to the pre-physical activity questionnaire score.
• There was a no statistical significance between pre-physical activity and post- physical activity interventions.

Discussion
• Increase awareness of evidence-based guidelines
• Vital for health care quality and safety: Prevention
• Educational programs implemented in variety of settings
• Availability of health policies to ensure success

References

Contact: Lena Qasem Lq59@sn.rutgers.edu