Abstract for Pediatric Journal

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“On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.” - C. Brown
Abstract

The omnipresence of childhood obesity in the United States has caused a mass shift of increased vigilance and operations in support of healthy diet and physical activity for children. Government and health entities are undecided as to a best practice for implementing programs that support this modification of behavior in children. However, previous systematic reviews delineate structure for a school-based intervention that promotes increase in physical activity and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables with children. This 12-week pilot study provides support for those reviews and seeks to ascertain if a school-based intervention increases knowledge and changes behaviors that will decrease the risk of obesity in middle school children.

In this pilot, students from a middle school health class were requested to take part in a study. Based on the inclusion criteria, students had to be in a pre-selected sixth grade health class with no pre-existing health conditions. All 31 students that agreed to participate met the inclusion criteria. Over the 12-week period students engaged in five lessons on nutritional wellness, obesity, and noncommunicable diseases and three interactive lessons on physical activity. Body mass index (BMI) and knowledge from a modified screening tool were measured pre-and post-intervention.

The pre-conclusive data is that there was increased knowledge on obesity and its risk factors and most students felt prepared to make healthier lifestyle choices. In preparation for a follow up study there would need to be more parental involvement as well as inclusion of counselors to address mental and social determinants.

Keywords: body mass index (BMI), obesity, nutrition, physical activity, middle school