Wellness 4 Uth: Increasing Health Through a School-Based Wellness Program

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Introduction

- 12.7 million obese children in America
- Individual, Behavioral, & Environmental factors contribute to risk of obesity
- Schools are ideal for wellness intervention because of their engagement of students, families, educators, and community workers.
- Schools also provide a safe place for children to engage in physical activity
- The purpose of this project was to determine whether an afterschool wellness program would be effective in promoting healthy eating habits and increasing physical activities in 3rd-5th graders.

Aims

1. To determine baseline BMI and physical fitness and knowledge on healthy nutritional behaviors and physical activities among third through fifth grade students in an elementary school.
2. To implement a school-based educational intervention that promotes an increase in physical activity behaviors over a 12-week period.
3. To determine post-intervention BMI and physical fitness and knowledge on healthy nutritional behaviors and physical activity in 3rd-5th graders who completed the 12-week intervention.

Methods

Design & Sample

- Pre-test, post-test quality improvement project
- 12-week program split into 3, 4-
- Study population included 10 3rd-5th grade Hispanic students in an urban school.
- Any student with parental consent and afterschool transportation was allowed to participate in the program

Study Measures

- Healthy Habits Assessment: measure nutritional and physical activity behaviors
- Fitness Test: ½ mile run, SitUps, PushUps, Reach
- Module Tests: 5-item assessment of knowledge given before and after each module
- BMI: calculated using height, weight, gender, and age of participant

Statistical Analysis

Aim one was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Aims two and three were analyzed nonparametric tests due to the small sample size. These aims were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Results

Healthy Habits Assessment

- Scores ranged from 7-28
- 7-14: poor; 15-21: fair; 22-28: good
- Pre-intervention: 8 fair, 1 good
- Post-intervention: 3 fair, 3 good
- Changes not statistically significant (p = 0.317)

Conclusions

Overall there were no statistically significant findings. However, the Wellness 4 Uth program was able to offer lessons for future research. There are a few changes that need to be made to the program that could produce different outcomes. With proper advertisement, a more child-friendly curriculum, and a longer run-time, there could be significant changes seen in the participants. The information provided by this project can inform other SBHCs or schools in general that would like to make an effort to decrease and further prevent childhood obesity by starting school-based wellness programs.