

Title of Intervention: Lighten Up

Website: <http://www.lightenupforever.org/index.htm>

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Individual Education, Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To decrease cardiovascular risk through lifestyle modification

Population: Individuals that are at high risk for cardiovascular disease

Setting: Christian-based churches and worksites near Charleston, South Carolina; faith-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- **Group Education:** Eight weekly educational sessions (health checks) combined Bible study with a health message. Sessions were based on the spiritual fruits of love, knowledge, peace, faith, kindness, joy, self-control and godliness. Health messages were presented at each session. Topics included nutrition, exercise, food labels, diabetes, food composition, vitamins and minerals and cardiovascular risk reduction information. Food items from home were brought to develop skills in reading food labels. Notebooks containing all educational materials were provided for each participant at the first health check.
- **Individual Education:** Weight and blood pressure measurements were made available after every educational session.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Participants were telephoned the evening before the health check to remind them not to eat or drink any calorie containing foods after supper. The call also served as an opportunity to obtain additional information and to answer questions. Telephone networking and group support was discussed during education sessions. During education sessions, participants shared scriptures, Christian disciplines and lifestyle change experiences.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Session leaders
- **Training:** Not mentioned
- **Technology:** Computer and printer
- **Space:** Classroom space
- **Budget:** Not mentioned
- **Intervention:** Telephones, Health check notebooks, materials for educational sessions, scale, blood pressure cuff and access to telephone numbers
- **Evaluation:** Materials for measurements of blood pressure, weight, height, cholesterol, attendance logs, behavior change checklist

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Cohort study
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - Attendance was recorded at each education session by leaders
 - Behavior Change Checklist
 - Health assessments included measurements of weight, height, blood pressure and fasting blood measurements for triglycerides, total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and glucose

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** Weight and BMI were significantly lower at the end of the 10-week program compared to baseline values. Systolic and mean blood pressures also fell significantly as did levels of triglycerides.

- Long Term Impact: Not measured

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: The program appears to be well accepted and can produce a significant impact on the cardiovascular risk factors associated with obesity.

Citation(s):

Oexmann, M. J., J. C. Thomas, et al. (2000). "Short-term impact of a church-based approach to lifestyle change on cardiovascular risk in African Americans." *Ethn Dis* 10(1): 17-23.

Oexmann, M. J., R. Ascanio, et al. (2001). "Efficacy of a church-based intervention on cardiovascular risk reduction." *Ethn Dis* 11(4): 817-22.