

Title of Intervention: The PATH program: Physical Activity and Teenage Health

Intervention Strategies: Group Education

Purpose of the Intervention: To increase exercise and health awareness and modify health behaviors in minority adolescents

Population: Minority high school students

Setting: Inner city public high school in New York City; school-based

Partners: School districts

Intervention Description: The intervention lasted for 11 weeks.

- Group Education: Classes consisted of 20-25 minutes of circuit training exercise and approximately 5 minutes of health behavior lecture and discussion. Heart rates were self-monitored during exercise to adjust exercise intensity. Exercise classes were taught by the regular physical education teacher. Health behavior topics included orientation to the program, exercise, nutrition, smoking cessation, stress management, heart disease, cancer and motivation. Each student received a workbook consisting of material from the Stanford Adolescent Heart Health Program and the PATH program.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Instructors for group sessions
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Computer and printer
- Space: Gym and classroom space
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Stanford Adolescent Heart Health Program materials, PATH (Physical Activity and Teenage Health) program materials, aerobic equipment, resistance equipment, lecture materials
- Evaluation: Standard physician scale, skin-fold caliper, sphygmomanometer, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, laboratory cholesterol testing, questionnaire

Evaluation:

- Design: Pre/post evaluation
- Methods and Measures:
 - Physical measurements included height, weight, total cholesterol, percent body fat and resting systolic and diastolic blood pressure
 - A self-reported questionnaire assessed age, ethnic background, family history of cardiovascular disease, cigarette smoking history, physical activity and diet habits, stress, health attitude, self-perception of health and socioeconomic status as determined by parental education

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Health knowledge scores increased significantly. Significant changes in cardiovascular fitness were observed in the intervention group.
- Long Term Impact: Not measured

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: This format of health promotion is both beneficial and well received in an inner-city high school environment. The results provide strong support that aerobic exercise should be a routine part of the physical education curriculum. The most significant change following the intervention was improved cardiovascular fitness in females. The findings indicate that the girls liked the health promotion curriculum, especially the aerobic activities of rope jumping and step aerobics.

Citation(s):

Fardy, P. S., R. E. White, et al. (1996). "Coronary disease risk factor reduction and behavior modification in minority adolescents: the PATH program." *J Adolesc Health* 18(4): 247-53.

Fardy, P. S., A. Azzollini, et al. (2000). "Gender and ethnic differences in health behaviors and risk factors for coronary disease among urban teenagers: the PATH program." *J Gend Specif Med* 3(2): 59-68.

Bayne-Smith, M., P. S. Fardy, et al. (2004). "Improvements in heart health behaviors and reduction in coronary artery disease risk factors in urban teenaged girls through a school-based intervention: the PATH program." *Am J Public Health* 94(9): 1538-43.