

Title of Intervention: Lowfat Lucy: Promoting the Selection of Low-Fat Milk in Elementary School Cafeterias in an Inner-City Latino Community

Intervention Strategies: Campaigns and Promotions, Group Education

Purpose of the Intervention: To promote the consumption of low-fat white milk

Population: Elementary school students in grades 1- 4; majority were Hispanic, eligible for free lunch, had limited English proficiency, and were not reading at grade level

Setting: Elementary schools in New York City, NY; school-based

Partners: School districts, universities, local hospital

Intervention Description:

- Campaign and Promotions: The intervention involved a multi-faceted media campaign to create interest in Lowfat Lucy. Product positioning, celebrity endorsements, taste tests, "teaser" advertising, product-related contests with product-related prizes, products, a slogan, and persuasion through entertainment were all included. The intervention began when posters were put up around the school stating "Lucy is coming in 2 weeks." These posters did not show exactly who or what Lucy was. Every few days, the posters were updated to count down the days until she was introduced in an assembly. Students had opportunities to try 1% low-fat white milk after the auditorium session and on another day outside the school exit at dismissal time. Students and parents were also given easy to read flyers about low-fat milk. Several three-dimensional, homemade cutout posters of Lucy holding a 1% low-fat white milk carton and saying "Drink Low fat Milk...It's Delicious" were put up near the milk chests in the cafeteria.
- Group Education: The auditorium session included information about heart health and the benefits of drinking low-fat milk. In addition, there were interactive games, a dramatic entrance by Lowfat Lucy and a brief presentation from Lucy. A presentation was also made at a parents' association meeting.

Theory: Social Marketing Theory

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Lowfat Lucy
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Auditorium or assembly space
- Budget: Estimated cost of the intervention was approximately \$2.25 per student, about one half of the supply costs involved relatively high-priced incentives
- Intervention: Posters, milk for taste tests, T-shirts, refrigerator magnets, novelty pencils
- Evaluation: Individuals to track and count trays

Evaluation:

- Design: Randomized controlled trial
- Methods and Measures:
 - Every third tray was collected from central trash disposal lines to count the number of cartons of whole milk and of low-fat milk and note whether they were empty or full
 - Availability and accessibility of both low-fat white milk and whole white milk were checked approximately every five minutes

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: The intervention lead to significant, sustained, positive changes in elementary student milk selection habits. Schools that received the intervention had, on average, a higher sampling of low-fat milk cartons than those schools that did not. Differences between intervention and control schools remained significant 3 to 4 months after the intervention.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: A large number of students who drink whole milk can be motivated by an educational intervention to switch to low-fat white milk without any apparent effect on the overall rate of milk consumption. The cost of the intervention can be reduced by obtaining donations for incentive items supplies, by limiting the distribution of incentive items or by replacing paid staff time with more volunteer time.

Citation(s):

Wechsler, H., C. E. Basch, et al. (1998). "Promoting the selection of low-fat milk in elementary school cafeterias in an inner-city Latino community: evaluation of an intervention." *Am J Public Health* 88(3): 427-33.