

Title of Intervention: Home-based nutrition interventions for older adults

Intervention Strategies: Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To increase fruit, vegetable and calcium-rich food consumption in community-dwelling, functionally impaired older adults

Population: Adults older than age 69 years who were ambulatory and sedentary

Setting: Boston area; home-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- Supportive Relationships: An in-depth personalized education program focused on increasing intake of fruits and vegetables to a minimum of five servings per day and calcium-rich foods to a minimum of three servings per day. The nutrition education program was provided through eight home visits, bi-weekly phone contacts and monthly letters over a six month period. Participants were given an education book designed for the program. Some of the nutrition topics covered included the importance of good nutrition at any age, health benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables, the importance of calcium-rich foods and risk factors for osteoporosis, the importance of choosing a variety of foods, what constitutes a serving, grocery shopping tips and nutrient dense recipes. Behavior-modification techniques such as goal setting, rewards, food log recording, role-playing, games and troubleshooting were included in the home visit sessions.

Theory: Transtheoretical Model

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Nutrition educators
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Telephones
- Space: Not mentioned
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Newsletters, education booklets, education materials
- Evaluation: Food frequency questionnaires, materials to analyze blood samples, adherence logs

Evaluation:

- Design: Randomized controlled trial
- Methods and Measures:
 - Food intake was assessed by a food frequency questionnaire
 - Fasting blood measures was collected to analyze nutrients and carotenoids

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: Participants in the intervention significantly increased their self-reported intake of fruits, vegetables and dairy each day. Blood levels of carotene confirm that intake of fruits, vegetables and dairy significantly increased.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: It is possible to improve the dietary intake of community-dwelling older adults to include more fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods. Recommendations should be specific and individualized to meet the dietary pattern and lifestyle of the individual. Compliance should be encouraged with record keeping as well as continuous monitoring and positive reinforcement.

Citation(s):

Bernstein, A., M. E. Nelson, et al. (2002). "A home-based nutrition intervention to increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich foods in community dwelling elders." *J Am Diet Assoc* 102(10): 1421-7.