Nutritional Science-2013

OMICS Group Conferences
Accelerating Scientific Discovery

2nd International Conference and Exhibition on
Nutritional Science & Therapy

July 15-17, 2013 Courtyard by Marriott Philadelphia Downtown, Philadelphia, USA

Better food better health, improving the nutrition, food resource management and physical activity for Latino families

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Abstract

North Carolina is experiencing a rapid increase in Latino population especially those in poverty and having the highest percent (41%) of children in poverty. Latinos' diets worsen the longer they are in the US. This shift is associated with higher rates of obesity and diabetes among those who have lived here for 15 or more years as wellas among the US-born Latinos. Gaining understanding of the nutritional practices of this population is key to promoting improved health. North Carolina State University faculty developed the *Better Food Better Health* program, a theory-based 5-session educational program, to improve the nutrition and health of Latino adults and children. The pilot was delivered in Spanish to 920 participants in 11 counties for 2 hours/session. The adults and children were divided into two groups: (1) adults and older children, and (2) children under the age of 6. The sessions focused on trying new foods and new recipes; portion control, limiting sugar, fat and sodium in meals, saving money on groceries and being physically active. Delivery methods were interactive, culturally sensitive, and designed to educate and facilitate behavioral change in the children and the adults by engaging all the senses; sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste. As such, the sessions started with exercise and included discussion, games, activities, stories, cooking demonstrations and taste tests. Pre/post tests collected behavior change. Program impacts included both children and adults making positive changes related to the key nutrition messages and reporting more physical activity.

Biography

Jacquelyn W. McClelland, a professor at North Carolina State University, provides statewide leadership for adult nutrition education and wellness as well as for specific diet-related chronic disease issues including heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis. She has developed or contributed to the development of numerous nutrition education programs delivered by Cooperative Extension Agents across North Carolina. She serves, by appointment of the Governor, on the NC Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Task Force. She is the Editor-in-chief of *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*, a peer-reviewed e-journal posted at: http://www.ncsu.edu/ffci/ and has published more than 45 papers.