A Mixed Methods Assessment of Family Influence on Weight-Related Behaviors among African-Americans

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Introduction

• African-Americans are disproportionately overweight in the U.S. [1].
• Overweight children are more likely to be overweight and obese as adults, and suffer adverse health outcomes [2, 3].
• Over 55% of African-American women and 37% of African-American men 20 years and older were classified as obese in 2011-12 [4].
• African-Americans tend to lose less weight than whites in weight-loss interventions [5,6].
• Motivation and adherence may play a role [7,8], but interventions targeting the values/customs of African-American culture may be more effective than general interventions [9].
• Factors such as family rules, emotional support, encouragement, positive reinforcement, and family involvement influence the decisions of children and parents in families [10].

Purpose

Conduct an exploratory study using a mixed methods approach to:
• Explore family influences on weight-related behaviors (physical activity and healthy eating)
• Examine relationship between family dynamics and weight-related behaviors

Screening of Participants

Each family will be screened via telephone and must meet the following criteria:
• Self-identify as African-American
• Minimum of two family members
• At least one overweight child between 10-14 years
• At least one obese adult who is viewed as primary caregiver
• All members of the family older than 6 years must participate in focus group

Recruitment

• Mail recruitment flyers and personalized letters to: churches, community centers, libraries, and community organizations in the Twin Cities
• Appear on Community Health Dialog with Clarence Jones, a health-focused show on the local radio station KMOJ 89.9 FM
• Publish print article in the Minnesota Spokesman Recorder and Insight News
• Use social media, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

Methodology

Analysis of focus group & survey data

Figure 1: African-American family

Figure 2: Prevalence of self-reported obesity among white Americans 2011-2013

Figure 3: Prevalence of self-reported obesity among black Americans 2011-2013

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Expected Results

We anticipate the focus groups will yield rich data, concerning the influence of the following factors on eating habits and physical activity behaviors:
• Familial interactions
• Familial social support
• Familial control related to parental rules and monitoring

Results will be used as pilot data for a resubmission of an NIH R01 application that will propose a family-based intervention to increase physical activity in overweight African-American youth.

Selected Citations

Introduction Credits:

Timeline

Proposed Study Activities

Timeline: June 2015 – May 2016

IRB application

Development of focus group guide & survey

Family recruitment

Pilot test focus group guide & survey

Focus groups, home inventories, & surveys with 10 families

Focus group transcription & survey data entry/cleaning

Analysis of focus group & survey data

Selected Citations