

Texas Obesity Research Center

Evaluation of Comadres de Salud- A Culturally Sensitive Obesity Prevention Intervention for Latinas

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim was to conduct a formative assessment of a community-based obesity prevention intervention, “Comadres de Salud” (Kin Sisters in Health). Based on the Social Cognitive Theory, Comadres de Salud is a multicomponent intervention aimed at improving diet and physical activity in low-income Latino mothers and their preschool children. This intervention is unique in that 1) it incorporates the cultural Latino scripts of familism, collectivism, simpatia and gender roles to enhance cultural sensitivity; and 2) it includes education on sleep hygiene as a way of enhancing adherence to dietary and physical activity changes. **Methods:** Latino women between the ages of 21-35, from the north side of Houston, TX, who were mothers of preschool children, were recruited for the intervention study. Two focus groups (n=11) were conducted, and acceptability surveys were administered at the end of the intervention. Data from the focus groups was recorded and transcribed. Qualitative description was used to analyze the focus group data. Descriptive and frequency analysis was performed on survey data. **Results:** For this group of women, participation in the intervention study was facilitated by having intervention sessions at a time that meet their needs and the interaction with other women. Some of the difficulties they encountered during the study were achieving their goals and following some of the study protocols, such as keeping track of their food intake. The participants suggested that involving other family members and increasing opportunities to learn about exercise would improve the study. The survey data reflected that the participants enjoyed the intervention and would recommend the intervention to other women. **Conclusions:** The formative assessment of this pilot study served as a useful tool to provide insight into the participants’ perceptions of an intervention and its delivery. Including other family members during the intervention enhances the incorporation of familism, which will increase the cultural sensitivity of the intervention. Goal setting was challenging

for this group of women. Further research to examine the how to enhance adherence to goals with this group of women is needed.

KEY WORDS: Latino, Obesity, Sleep, Women, Culture