

Impacts of Health Habits through Fit5

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: The Fit5 program was developed by the Special Olympics to help individuals with developmental disabilities make improvements in their health and fitness. The purpose of this study was to examine whether a 6 week program using the Fit5 resource could result in improvements in the physical activity and diet of ten adults with developmental disabilities. **METHODS:** The individuals were taken through a six-week program where for 45 minutes each week they would exercise according to the Fit5 information that they were provided. During each session, instructors would briefly talk about their diet. At the beginning and end of the process, everyone filled out a questionnaire regarding their habits when it comes to exercise and their diet. Responses from multiple-choice questions were coded for statistical analysis. For numerical answer choices, the code was synonymous. For example, eating 1-2 fruits a day was coded as a 2. For responses that were categorical, the preferred choice was coded with a higher score. For example, for the frequency of snack food intake, daily was scored as "0" and never was scored as "3". **RESULTS:** There were two categories that had a significant difference in the pre and post-program data. The biggest decrease in unhealthy behavior was the amount of time spent watching TV and playing video games followed by the amount of snack food consumed. The average hours of tv and video games per day was 3 hours per day before Fit5 and 1.8 hours per day after Fit5 making the T-value less than .001. The frequency of consuming snack food the average score was .3 before Fit5 and 1.1 after Fit5 which represents a shift from weekly to monthly consumption of snack foods, the T-value is less than 0.05. There were also two points that were close to being significant, sugary drinks and vegetable consumption. Sugary drinks originally scored at 0.3 at the start of Fit5 to scoring a 0.8 at the end of Fit5 showing a shift from having these drinks daily to almost weekly to daily having a t value of 0.051. The number of vegetables consumed went from or scoring a 0.9 at the start of Fit5, meaning only having one vegetable a day, to scoring a 1.4 at the end of Fit5, the conception of 2-3 vegetables a day, day, with a T-value of 0.069. **CONCLUSION:** The hypothesis is supported by the survey results, as we do see an improvement in some of the habits. While there wasn't a substantial improvement in the data, with this being a small group consisting of only ten individuals, and this study focused on getting these individuals to exercise, this data is still promising. The program was designed to briefly talk about diet before starting the focus of the program, encouraging exercise. If we could focus more time on healthy diet and lifestyle portions and provide more material, it is likely that we would see more significant difference data points.