Pennsylvania WIC Educators Affirm Need for Folic Acid Education of Low-Income, SNAP-Ed Eligible Women

Elizabeth Ruder
Barbara Lohse

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.rit.edu/other

Recommended Citation
Background: Nutrition education research typically focuses on the program’s acceptance and usefulness with the target audience, but sustainable programs must be valued by the nutrition educator for its positive impact on their work. Everyone Needs Folic Acid is a colorful, simple nutrition education program delivered by digital photo frame platform or video intended to help low-income persons appreciate the role of folic acid for all age groups.

Objective: To describe Women Infant and Children (WIC) educator practices related to folic acid prior to impact assessment of Everyone Needs Folic Acid on WIC educator practices.

Methods: Face-to-Face (n=8) or telephone (n=13) interviews with nutrition educators (n=21) from WIC clinics serving Western (n=6) and Central (n=6) Pennsylvania. Results: Using a 5-point scale, educators reported strong interest in folic acid (mean=3.88, SD=0.93), and rated it highly important during pregnancy (mean=4.95, SD=0.22). Handouts and/or discussion were the sole method(s) of education reported. Only 43% received client-initiated folic acid questions/requests and they rated WIC participant interest as low (mean=2.88, SD=0.89).

Conclusions: WIC educators affirmed the need for nutrition education focused on folic acid, but findings suggest that novel delivery methods are needed to enhance client interest.

Results

Nearly all educators self-identified race as White, and reported a Bachelor’s degree as the highest level of education. Educators were experienced and mean time employed at current clinic suggested stable employment.

Clinic and Demographic Characteristics of Participating WIC Educators

- **Clinics**: 12
- **Clinic Geographic Location**: Western Pennsylvania 6, Central Pennsylvania 6
- **Educators, total**: 21
- **Educators, Western Pennsylvania**: 10
- **Educators, Central Pennsylvania**: 11
- **Years Practicing as an Educator**
  - 1: 17.4 ± 12.7 y
  - 2: 11.9 ± 10.3 y
- **Highest Level of Education**
  - Associate’s 18
  - Bachelor’s 18
  - Master’s 2
- **Professional Credentials**
  - Registered Dietitian 2
  - Registered Nurse 1
  - IBCLC 1
- **Race**
  - White 20
  - More than 1 race reported 1

Results reported on 5-point scale, 1= low, 5= high

- **How important do you think folic acid is to child health during pregnancy?**
  - Yes, n (%) 9 (43)
  - No, n (%) 12 (57)

Conclusions

WIC educators affirmed the need for nutrition education focused on folic acid, but the findings indicated that educators typically employed discussion and/or handouts as their delivery method, and client interest was low.

Novel delivery methods, such as digital photo frame programs, may enhance client interest. Future steps will discern the impact of Everyone Needs Folic Acid on educator practices as a critical consideration for developing and delivering effective and sustainable programs.

References


Funder

Funded by the Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Human Services (DHHS) through PA Nutrition Education TRACE, a part of USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.