

Abstract

Obesity is one of the biggest health concerns in the United States. Obesity contributes to the high cost of healthcare in the United States. It is estimated that the cost of obesity related disease is around 147 billion. Furthermore there is a great disparity between low socio-economic status (SES) women and women that are more affluent. Women at the lower end of the income range have more than double the rates of obesity (Zuehkle, 2010). Therefore it is imperative to find ways that reduce disparities and improve the health of low SES women. Through the literature review there was significant evidence showing that group interventions and motivational interviewing have shown promising results in the promotion of weight loss and the adoption of healthy eating habits. The development of the Healthy Mom's Initiative was an attempt to combat obesity with evidence-based practices. The project was based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory. WIC staff were instructed on how to implement the Healthy Mom's Initiative during 2 training sessions. The staff facilitated the 4 weekly educational sessions on diet and exercise. WIC staff were evaluated on knowledge of physical activity through scores obtained from International Physical Activity Questionnaire and WIC users were evaluated pre-intervention with the Weight Loss Readiness Test II. BMI of WIC users were evaluated pre and post intervention. Project data demonstrated that staff that had lower BMI had increased knowledge of physical activity requirements. Furthermore due to low participation in the intervention there was not a significant reduction in BMI. Anecdotally, the one woman that lost weight scored high on the Weight Lose Test. Due to the nature of how WIC operates, ongoing efforts and training would require additional governmental funding to sustain. However, WIC staff now understand the importance of

encouraging women to be active and reported increased knowledge on exercise requirements.

Keywords: obesity, poverty, female, Texas, WIC, exercise, stress, depression, and postpartum