Promoting a Culturally Sensitive Weight Loss Strategy among Obese Mexican-American Adults
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Problem: The national treatment guideline for overweight and obese adults has been unsuccessful for Mexican-American adults. There remains an absence of an individual's racial, ethnic, and cultural identity and beliefs in the assessment and planning stages of the weight loss guidelines. A focus group was conducted to better understand obese Mexican-American adults perceptions of the culturally sensitivity of the national weight loss guidelines.

Evidence: In conjunction with Healthy People 2010, the Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) in cooperation with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) set a primary goal of reducing obesity among vulnerable populations including Mexican-American adults by 15%. The treatment guidelines by the National Institutes of Health recommend comprehensive medical components that stress individualized lifestyle modification, pharmacologic and surgical interventions. A comprehensive scientific literature review of MEDLINE, Pubmed, Cinahl, and Cochrane data base identified best of practice.

Strategy: Obese Mexican-American adults from a single family practice were invited to participate in a focus group. After answering questions about the focus group, a written consent was obtained, vital statistics and demographic information was gathered. A Spanish speaking moderator led a 90 minute focus group using a written script. A non-participating bi-lingual field note taker and previously identified voice recorder were used to gather group responses.

Practice Change: Culturally specific strategies to promote effective weight loss among obese Mexican-American adults in a primary care setting by primary care provider were identified for change in practice.

Evaluation: A focus group was conducted and verbatim responses recorded. Upon completion of the group, all verbatim responses and demographic data were analyzed to determine common themes, trends, and patterns.

Results: Three themes directly related to Hispanic cultural beliefs and lack of cultural sensitivity in the practice guidelines were family influence, lifestyle practices, and physical appearance. Interventions to promote healthy and sustainable weight loss with an emphasis on cultural health beliefs were derived from the group. These included a family centered approach in an intimate group setting.

Recommendations: Identify Hispanic cultural health beliefs of weight and body size during the assessment phase. Promote individualized weight loss strategies which include family members in dietary and physical activity planning stages. Encourage family members to participate in weight loss strategies.

Lessons Learned: Hispanics do not view national weight loss strategies as culturally sensitive. Hispanic cultural health beliefs need to be included in the assessment and planning stages for optimal weight loss strategies among obese Mexican-American adults. Primary care providers can use a family centered approach as an effective tool in their management of obese Mexican-American adults in their practice.

Bibliography:


