

Conference

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Conference theme(s)

Right to Health - *health literacy, social inclusion, accessible health information, preventive health*

Paper Title

Diabetes School Based Prevention in a Vietnamese Community: Lessons and Future Directions

Presenter

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Abstract

Background

Schools offer significant opportunities for health promotion and chronic disease prevention/management programs. This presentation discusses a Diabetes Education Series conducted in a local primary school by the Australian Community Centre for Diabetes (ACCD), Victoria University, Melbourne, in partnership with Nang Hong non-profit Vietnamese cultural organisation.

Rational/Objectives

The aim of the series was to engage adult members of the Vietnamese community in diabetes education, prevention and planned physical activity to reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes and diabetes complications.

Materials & Methods

Approximately 50 Vietnamese parents and elderly citizens associated with the primary school and/or Nang Hong participated in the program undertaken in the multicultural city of St Albans in the Brimbank local government area of the Western suburbs of Melbourne. The program consisted of both research and community health education and development components delivered to the community in the school hall over a five week period. The weekly sessions included questionnaires, biometric measurements and interactive presentations to the community in collaboration with a Vietnamese interpreter, LOTE teacher and writer on the topics of: 1. The diabetes epidemic: Who is at risk? 2. What is diabetes, how can I prevent it? 3. Nutrition and Healthy Eating; 4. Physical Activity; 5. Healthy Living Contract. In the final session, program members were invited to participate in a 12 week plan involving monitoring and modification of diet and physical activity levels.

Results

The results consist of analyses of demographic, risk assessment and evaluation questionnaires using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) as well as field notes, qualitative comments and photos gathered throughout the five week program.

A number of strategies appear to be key to engaging the Vietnamese community. These include:

- involvement of key respected community individuals and interpreter with experience in education and health
- providing opportunities for audience participation,
- awareness of the level of understanding by participants
- in-community site rather than in a more formal health or academic based site
- cultural additions such as rice cooking demonstrations

Conclusions

The program has contributed valuable lessons for the continuation of the program in diverse communities in the Western region and offers support to community based health promotion and chronic disease prevention/management models.