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Bridging the gap: Facilitating a healthy weight program in a rural primary care office

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Background: Adult obesity in the United States contributes to several chronic health conditions and two billion dollars in health care expenditures. Health disparities related to obesity is even greater in rural areas.

Objective: Implement a patient-centered health promotion program in a rural primary care office to reduce weight-related health conditions.

Methods: A convenience sample of 7 participants, age 18- 60 with a BMI \geq 28, volunteered and completed the 14-week project. Monthly group sessions and weekly individual sessions provided nutritional education, goal setting, and physical activity measures. Participants received a pedometer, food logs, and a journal. Weight, physical activity level, fat intake, fruit, vegetable, and fiber intake and self-efficacy were measured pre and post intervention.

Results: Six had a 25% increase in their fruit, vegetable, & fiber intake and a 50% increase in physical activity level, a mean decrease in fat intake of 22% and weight loss of seven pounds.

Conclusions: Interventions combining goal setting and accountability with education on dietary choices and physical activity result in healthier lifestyle choices. **Implications:** The findings support education on dietary choices and physical activity conducted in a primary care office can lead to lifestyle changes that will reduce some health disparities

Biography

Patricia Catlin is nursing faculty at a rural Tennessee BSN program. She also manages the campus health clinic and oversees a nursing van health education outreach through the college. She has an interest in improving health through lifestyle changes. During her ten years in rural primary care, she has conducted weight loss and lifestyle improvement sessions to improve the health status of the rural population. As an Army Reserve medical officer, she educated soldiers in weight management through lifestyle changes. She completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice implementing a healthy behavior program in a rural primary care clinic.

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