COSTS OF TRADITIONAL RECRUITMENT METHODS FAVOR EXAMINATION OF NOVEL STRATEGIES TO RECRUIT LOW-INCOME WOMEN TO NUTRITION EDUCATION IMPACT STUDIES

Barbara Lohse1, Kristen Arnold1, Patricia Wamboldt1
1Department of Nutritional Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Abstract

Background: Current legislation and policy environments call for evidence of impact from nutrition education interventions. Non-personnel costs to recruit low-income women to a web-based nutrition education program were examined as part of an impact assessment.

Methods: About Eating, a 5-session web-based module on eating behaviors was studied in low-income women using a randomized, controlled design. Traditional recruitment methods (e.g., phone, flyers, postcards) using low-income venues (e.g., WIC, grocery stores) were used. SNAP participants were recruited, and non-personnel costs to recruit low-income women were calculated and documented. Websites unique to recruitment strategy enabled portal identification to detail cost and effectiveness.

Results: Estimated reach from over 5 months of recruitment was $19,000 and was similarly divided between the two strategies (phone calls, flyers and postcards targeting SNAP hits recruited 84% of the sample). Of 1,020 participants, 319 (31%) were enrolled in SNAP and 305 (30%) were SNAP participants. Final non-personnel cost to recruit 305 to the website was $0.00/person. Final cost to recruit 304 to the website from low-income venues was $13.10/person using professionally printed flyers ($2.65/flyer) and mailings ($2.25/mail).

Conclusions: For low-income women, high costs associated with traditional recruitment methods may hinder nutrition intervention impact assessment. Attention to alternative recruitment methods (e.g., social media or smartphones) is suggested to effect evidence-based nutrition education.

Learning Needs Codes (Complete): 9030 Outcomes research, cost/benefit analysis, 9060 Research development and design, 6050 instructional materials development.

Background & Aims

The purpose of this project was to examine costs associated with recruitment of low-income women from Pennsylvania to a study measuring the impact of an online nutrition education intervention. About Eating. Costs associated with several traditional recruitment strategies were compared and contrasted with related factors, e.g., time, resource rates, and ease of use.

About Eating is a 5-module program addressing food variety, healthy eating, internal regulation of intake, food resource management skills, and being active. Costs associated with the labor model of scientific evidence-based research. A randomized study (n=302) revealed positive impacts on food resource management skills, affirmed tenants associated with labor, and demonstrated that eating competence was a predictor of physical activity level.

Multiple traditional recruitment strategies were applied to 2 specific subject pools: 1) Low-income venues, i.e., WIC clinics, Selective Army, housing authority offices, career and tech schools, laboratories, libraries, YMCA, discount stores. 2) List of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants generated by the PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and County Assistance Offices. Recruitment strategies and potential reach are shown in Figure 1. Recruitment and retention outcomes for each subject pool are in Figure 2 and characteristics of participants who were successfully recruited and retained are shown in the Table.