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## Abstract #145921

**Purpose:** A needs assessment informed nutrition education programming for low-income male Pennsylvania Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants.

**Methods:** Professional telephone interviewers surveyed male SNAP participants 18 to 59 years with child care responsibilities about health status, eating behaviors, weight satisfaction, eating competence, food security, technology access, and nutrition interests. The statewide sample (n=101; mean age 37.4 ± 13.4 years) was diverse in employment status (27% employed full time, 23% unemployed), race (55% white, 26% black) educational level (59% high school or less), and household structure. Most had significant primary caregiver responsibilities (74%); 92% reported child meal/snack preparation.

**Results/Findings:** Popular nutrition topics included foods for children (89%), healthful eating (85%), food safety (76%), and easy recipes (74%). 76% identified barriers to eating healthful foods; cited most frequently were taste preference, time, and money. Preferred nutrition education methods were print materials (67%), online information (56%) and one-on-one educator time (49%). Nutrition topics of interest were associated with race (non-whites were more interested in managing money, p=0.036), education level (less educated were more interested in easy recipes, p<0.001), and weight satisfaction (weight dissatisfied were more interested in weight loss, p=0.024). Barriers to healthful eating were not associated with education, race, worry about money for food, or weight satisfaction. Preferred education methods remained unchanged when race and urban/rural status were controlled.

**Conclusions:** Low-income men were not homogeneous in preferred nutrition education topics, methods, or needs. Specific audience assessments will benefit nutrition education for low-income males.

## Introduction

Recent research has highlighted not only an increase in the role of males with primary or significant child caretaker responsibilities,<sup>1</sup> but also the nutritional impact or influence males have on their children when it comes to selecting meals and snacks<sup>2,3</sup>. In addition research has shown a need to improve the nutrition education of males to include a focus on perceived barriers to healthy eating, as well as effective educational methods<sup>4,5</sup>.



## Methods

Professional telephone interviewers surveyed male SNAP participants 18 to 59 years with child care responsibilities about health status, eating behaviors, weight satisfaction, eating competence, food security, technology access, and nutrition interests. The statewide sample (n=101; mean age 37.4 ± 13.4 years) was diverse in employment status (27% employed fulltime, 23% unemployed), race (55% white, 26% black) educational level (59% high school or less), and household structure. Most had significant or primary caregiver responsibilities (74%); 92% reported child meal/snack preparation and more than half (54.5%) were the major decision makers regarding household food and shopping.

## Results

Figure 1: What was the greatest influence on the foods males eat?



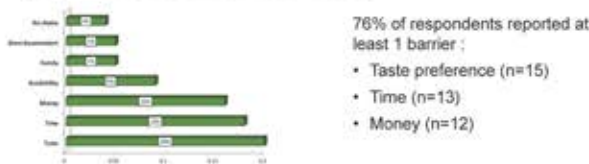
Also of interest was that no one indicated that convenience was an influence on the foods they eat.

Figure 2: What nutrition topics are of interest?



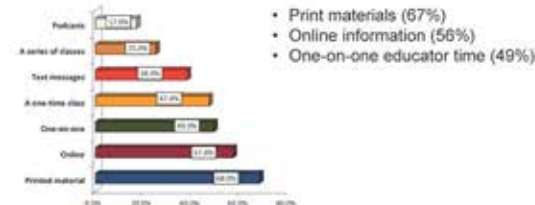
Nutrition topics of interest were associated with race (non-Whites were more interested in managing money, p=0.036), education level (less educated were more interested in easy recipes, p<0.001), and weight satisfaction (weight dissatisfied were more interested in weight loss, p=0.024).

Figure 3: What are the barriers to healthful eating?



Barriers to healthful eating were not associated with education, race, worry about money for food, or weight satisfaction. Of interest is that taste had greater influence on what males eat and was the largest barrier to healthful eating.

Figure 4: What education method do males prefer?



Text messages, a series of classes and podcasts are the least favored approach.

Preferred education methods remained unchanged when race and urban/rural status were controlled. Preferred education methods were associated with age with the older age group preferring a one-time class (p=0.012) and the 26 to 34 year olds showing least preference for one-on-one education (p=0.012). Printed material or on-line training did not differ by age, education and rural status.

## Conclusions

Low-income males were not homogeneous in preferred nutrition education topics, methods, or needs. The increasing role of males in meal and snack preparation and as major decision makers for food and shopping, highlight the importance of male influence as caretaker or nutrition provider for children. Specific audience assessments will benefit nutrition education for low-income males.

## Acknowledgements

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