

Community Health Project: Addressing Obesity during Covid-19

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Obesity is commonly known to affect 27% of adults in the United States (Wadden et al., 2002). The medical condition is the result of not eating healthy, little to no exercise, genetics, medication and other factors (Cava et al., 2017). If adults that are obese do not treat the medical condition then there will be long term problems such as diabetes and cancer (Cava et al., 2017). “In Seattle, a study of critically sick COVID-19 patients made comparative discoveries. This examination found that 85% of patients with obesity required mechanical ventilation, compared to 64% of patients without the condition. Additionally, 62% of the patients with obesity died of COVID-19, compared with 36% of those without obesity” (Stefan et al., 2020). To combat that issue the purpose of our program is to provide a way to lose weight and become healthy while in a pandemic and staying safe at home.

Obesity also puts many people more at risk for Covid-19. This health condition ultimately makes adults and children vulnerable: Patients that have obesity tend to have respiratory programs that cause their lungs to fail in the future (Stefan et al., 2020). Additionally, unhealthy eating and not putting more care into being healthy causes patients to become overweight/obese (Medanić et al., 2012).

Obesity in many ways has stunted the healthy lives of many in the world. How can we combat this personal challenge to decrease the bulge? While the world is struggling in a pandemic how can most willing participants make the needed changes for a better life? The best solution for these questions would be *Fast It*. Our program will provide participants with suggestions of meal plans, to assist with portion control and to encourage the participants to eat vegetables and fruits. It will also generate a variation of workout routines for the year. No more boring day after day workouts here.

Last but not least, we will provide a journal to help track meals, frequency, and give insight on what foods aren't working for your metabolism. By supplying these tools participants will see a change in weight, an adjustment in thinking, and achieve a healthier lifestyle.

There are many benefits to losing and keeping weight off. The best improvement would be a person's mental health and their energy/mood will change for the better. There will be a possible reduction of diabetes, chances of heart disease, and obesity-associated cancers (Cava et al., 2017). There have been numerous studies that have found a correlation between physical activity and the general well-being, mood and anxiety of a person (Ströhle, 2009). There has been a lot of research showing that physical activity decreases the risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension and stroke (Varo et al., 2003). Additional benefits from a physically active lifestyle are a “reduction in the incidence and prevalence of osteoporosis, lower risk of falls and fractures in the elderly, and a lower risk of anxiety and depression” (Varo et al., 2003). This is the reason why “most international guidelines recommend a goal of 150 min/week of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity” (Warburton et al, 2017).

There have been many programs created in the District in order to ensure that adults live a healthy lifestyle. The District of Columbia created an “Overweight and Obesity Action Plan”. Because 55 percent of adults in DC are overweight/obese, they created a plan to increase access to nutritious food and increase participation in physical activity (District of Columbia, 2015). Additionally, “the District of Columbia Overweight and Obesity Action Plan supports the implementation of strategies that: 1) create a culture of wellness, 2) address social determinants of health, and 3) enable and support behaviors that effectively reduce and prevent overweight and obesity (District of Columbia, 2015). There have also been resources such as dchealth.dc.gov that have provided helpful links such as ChooseMyPlate.gov and the Dietary Guidelines for America which are strategies to address access to healthy foods is critical to prevent obesity and chronic disease (District of Columbia, 2015).

There are also lifestyle programs [that] are effective in managing obesity but often report poor attendance and commitment that hinder treatment effectiveness and health outcomes (Burgess et al, 2017). There are also some barriers which can cause people not to complete physical activity: There are different behavior changes which include poor motivation; environmental, societal and social pressures; lack of time; health and physical limitations; negative thoughts/moods” (Burgess et al, 2017). It is important to develop “well-structured prevention programs that would encourage people to become aware of obesity as a disease” because physical activity is important for obesity prevention and health (Medanić et al., 2012).

The policy that we want to implement is making it mandatory that grocery stores reduce the price of fresh fruits and vegetables. Also we will ask the government to increase the access to grocery stores. There are food deserts that lack full-service grocery stores which contributes to the rising rates of obesity in low income and racial minority residents (Larson et al). There are many low-income consumers that aren’t able to follow the dietary guidelines (Jetter et al). The food environment can have a great impact on the choices that low-income consumers have on eating healthier foods (Jetter et al). This is because the availability and the price of healthier food options can limit their ability to eat a healthier diet (Jetter et al). Public policies should be considered in the food environment in order to encourage the consumption of healthier foods (Jetter et al).

The program that we will be creating will be a guideline for adults that want to seek a healthy lifestyle. There will be the creation of a website which will be a resource for people who want to learn more about being healthy and eating right, with recommendations to eat whole grains, vegetables and fruits (Yaktine et al, 2013). Our website and program will be able to make an impact in adult’s lifestyles because they will increase their regular physical activity, increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, decrease the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, and reduce the consumption of high-energy dense foods, which are generally foods high in fat and sugar.

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