Improving nutrition & preventing obesity: Developing interventions for ethnic minority groups

Dr Maria Maynard
Diet related health: Ethnicity matters

Heart fears over salty Afro-Caribbean meals

Britain’s Afro-Caribbean population are putting their health at risk because popular traditional meals can contain as much salt as 38 packets of crisps, researchers say.

Diabetes a ‘South Asian time-bomb’

A new diabetes centre in Birmingham is aiming to tackle the rising number of cases in the South Asian community.

One in four kidney dialysis patients in the city are from the community, according to figures obtained by BBC Inside Out West Midlands.

Experts fear more young people will be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, linked to Western diet and minimal exercise.

Ethnic groups' health 'suffering'

Ethnic minorities in London have higher levels of heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and TB, a report says.

The Indications of Public Health in English Regions report shows the groups struggle with their health due to poor socioeconomic status and education.

Ethnic minority groups in the capital have a poor experience of the NHS.
Ethnic patterning of obesity

Excess risk of overweight and obesity consistently seen among some ethnic groups.

Attendance at a place of worship from adolescence to adulthood

The DiEt & Active Living (DEAL) Study
DEAL Study

Aim: Conduct small-scale exploration of culturally acceptable childhood obesity prevention interventions among diverse ethnic groups

http://dash.sphsu.mrc.ac.uk/public/DEAL/
Setting & participants

Setting:
  ◦ London, UK
  ◦ 6 schools; 6 places of worship (churches, mosques and temples)

Participants:
  ◦ 70 children (8-13 years)
  ◦ 43 parents, 12 grandparents
  ◦ Community representatives from 143 organisations
  ◦ Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White UK

Recruitment

- One invitation each to 12 schools achieved successful recruitment (42% response)

- A range of different methods needed for places of worship (9% response):
  - Telephone contact
  - Mass-mailing
  - Cold-calling by the Principal Investigator
  - Engaging with community networks

Qualitative focus group analysis:

All children:
- Nutrition knowledge
- Poor quality school meals
- Lack of PA among girls

Minority children:
- Family life
- Values
- Food practices
Dietary choices (Maynard et al, forthcoming)

Figure 1. Nsokobi - a popular Nigerian dish not included in standard UK dietary assessment tools. (Source www.igbofocus.co.uk)
Acceptability of interventions

- Positive evaluation of intervention sessions in both settings

- Parents and wider community also approved

  “A good Christian/Muslim/Hindu/etc. is a healthy one!!!”
  (Mosque representative)

- But...highlighted lack of resources and infrastructure as the key limitations to providing practical support
Summary

- Interventions among diverse ethnic groups
  - complex recruitment, cultural frameworks and sustainability issues

- Schools
  - logistically less challenging

- Creative community settings
  - provide culturally specific support and engaging whole families
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