



Go Folic! A Multi-Lingual Community Clinic Intervention to Increase Folic Acid Knowledge & Supplementation among Women not Planning Pregnancy

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INTRODUCTION

The USPHS recommends that all women who can become pregnant take 400 mcg of folic acid daily to reduce the risk of having a child with a neural tube defect, preferably through vitamin supplementation. However, many women do not understand folic acid's preconception health benefits and multi-vitamins can be unaffordable for low-income women.

The goal of the Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project is to increase folic acid supplementation among reproductive-age women in San Francisco through two components:

1. A multilingual social marketing and community outreach campaign;
2. A clinic-based distribution program through which reproductive-age women clients are offered a one-year supply of multivitamins with the recommended daily value of folic acid.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Is it feasible for community clinic staff with limited time to implement an intervention to increase clients' folic acid knowledge and supplementation?

METHODS

In August 2010, we surveyed 35 staff to assess their ability to implement the intervention. We also surveyed 95 clients who received vitamins between October 2009 to June 2010 to determine if the intervention had increased their intake of a daily multi with folic acid.

RESULTS

- Over 90% of clinic staff feel that offering free vitamins with folic acid to all [female] clients should be a routine component of clinical services.
- Fifty-four percent of participating staff reported that they implemented the intervention with 25% or greater of their eligible women clients.
- Fifty-two percent indicated that the program is a worthwhile adjunct to the clinic.
- Over 70% of clients surveyed reported that they learned about folic acid and started to take a multivitamin consistently because of the intervention.



CONCLUSIONS

Findings suggests the intervention is feasible for already busy community clinic staff and increases women's knowledge and intake of folic acid.



THE INTERVENTION

The San Francisco Department of Public Health Go Folic! Project partnered with community clinics to implement a 2-6 minute intervention to increase folic acid supplementation among English, Spanish and Chinese-speaking women clients, ages 14-44, with a focus on those not contemplating pregnancy. Steps were as follows:

1. At registration, client is given a one-page information sheet about the beauty, general and preconception health benefits of folic acid and the vitamin distribution project (15 seconds).
2. Medical Assistant (MA) identifies whether or not the client is interested in receiving multivitamins with folic acid from the clinic (15 seconds).
3. If client agrees, MA reviews basic information, answers client's questions, instructs client on how to take a multivitamin and provides free bottles of Go Folic! Multis; client participation/refusal is noted in chart (up to 4.5 minutes).
4. Physician reinforces message of taking folic acid for general health and future pregnancies, and either congratulates client for accepting multivitamins or encourages her to reconsider (1 minute).

EDUCATION MATERIALS /MESSAGING

Go Folic! client education and outreach materials are available in English, Spanish, Chinese. A separate set of materials were developed specifically for teen and young adult women. Messaging and graphic designs were developed with extensive input from and field-testing with women in San Francisco's youth, African American, Latina and Chinese communities

Marketing research included written surveys, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups. Primary findings included: 1) Most women had not heard of folic acid; those who had learned about it within the context of pregnancy; 2) while preconception health benefits were very important, making this the first or primary message would "shut out" women who were not contemplating pregnancy; 3) general health and beauty benefits (hair, skin,nails) resonated with all groups but emphasis should vary by age and ethnicity/language.

In response to findings, client education and marketing materials focused on reaching "non-contemplators" with the following messages:

- Primary (youth): Folic acid is "good for hair, skin, and nails"
- Primary (adults): A daily multivitamin is good for your health
- Secondary: A daily multivitamin with folic acid helps build a stronger body for future pregnancies and can help to prevent some serious birth defects

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