

## The Effect of a Peer-Led Nutrition and Physical Education Intervention on Behavior

### Abstract

Increasing the quality and length of life is one of the overarching goals of Healthy People 2020. There has been limited research regarding peer to peer nutrition and physical activity education relevant to life quality and length. The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of a peer-led nutrition education and intervention on behaviors and attitudes toward healthy eating and physical activity among college freshmen at local university. The transtheoretical model was used to describe the process of behavior change as the students moved among the stages within this model. The data were obtained from a previous study done at the University in which 203 students participated. Using a quantitative pre- and post-test experimental research design, the effectiveness of the peer-led nutrition education and physical activity intervention were evaluated. The results of the paired sample *t* test and the difference of proportions test revealed a statistically significant increase of peer-led education on participants' knowledge and attitudes toward nutrition and physical activity, consumption of healthier food choices, and engagement in physical activity. These findings suggest that when healthy attitudes and behaviors are created, healthy food choices are made and physical exercises are implemented. Recommendations from this study are to educate young adults regarding the importance of healthy eating and regular physical activity as well as to continue to work toward healthy food choices at school, home, and in the community. The social change implications of these findings are in the clear recommendations for the achievement and maintenance of healthy eating and physical activity.