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Evaluation of Breakfast Eating Habits of Female College Students

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Breakfast eating habits can positively or negatively affect one’s health. Skipping breakfast has been associated with weight gain, depressed mood, and overall academic performance. The purpose of this project was to: 1) assess the breakfast consumption habits of female college students, the reasons for specific habits, and the students understanding of the benefits of consuming breakfast; and 2) design an educational intervention to address the findings of the assessment.

Participants for the assessment (n=7) were female college students between 18 and 20 years of age and members of an on-campus sorority. Evaluation was conducted using an 8-question survey instrument. The survey instrument obtained information regarding participants’ breakfast eating habits, their reasons for skipping breakfast, and their knowledge of the impact breakfast can have on mood and weight. Only 29% of respondents stated they ate breakfast daily, while 43% stated they consumed breakfast three to six times per week. Those that did not eat breakfast daily cited no appetite, not enough time, and not enough money as their main reasons. The majority of participants, 86%, indicated interest in learning quick and inexpensive healthful breakfast options.

A 20-minute nutrition education intervention was designed to increase participants’ knowledge of the benefits of eating breakfast and give to participants examples of low-cost and easy to prepare healthful food options for breakfast. During the educational session, participants were able to take part in a taste testing of different low-cost and easy to prepare breakfast options. Additionally, participants were given recipes of other low-cost and easy to prepare healthful breakfast foods. All participants stated they found the lesson beneficial and stated they were likely or very likely to begin eating breakfast every day. Furthermore, all participants were able to list one example of a healthful ready-made breakfast food option and one inexpensive breakfast food option. All participants were able to identify one benefit of eating breakfast and stated that receiving recipes was a positive aspect of the educational program.

One limitation of this project was its size. Future research and projects should expand to other sororities or groups on campus. Lack of time, resources, and food preparation knowledge is a noted barrier to breakfast consumption for this target audience, and therefore, future educational interventions should not only include basic nutrition education but should also include recipe demonstrations and taste testing of recipes.