

Nursing with Eating, Activity, and Supportive Environment (EASE): Effects of an Eight-week Mentoring Program

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ABSTRACT

Each year, approximately 2.8 million adults die from complications related to obesity (World Health Organization, 2011). One in three adults aged 20 years or older is obese, and 6% are morbidly obese. This problem is increasing at an alarming rate in young adults, and 20.5% of college students are classified as being overweight based upon their body mass index (BMI) (Adderley-Kelly, 2007). The purpose of this study was to increase knowledge about evidence-based, effective interventions that will enable college-aged, pre-nursing students to attain physical and mental well-being. The participants (N=24) were freshman and sophomore pre-nursing majors who were randomized into two groups (control and intervention). The intervention group met once a week for an eight-week nutrition and physical activity mentoring program at Texas Woman's University. The participants were educated about proper diet and exercise recommendations and kept physical activity, nutrition, and stress management logs. Measured outcomes, mean changes and standard deviations over the eight week period included body weight ($-0.3 \text{ kg} \pm 1.7$), BMI ($-0.12 \text{ kg/m}^2 \pm 0.68$), waist circumference ($-2.5 \text{ cm} \pm 1.9$), and perceived stress scale (0.0 ± 3.6). One-way ANOVAs with a p value of 0.05 were used for statistical analysis. There were no significant differences in weight, BMI, waist circumference or stress between the groups. Body composition and mental stress are difficult to change in an eight-week mentoring program, although improved knowledge may set the stage for future behavior change. A longer term program may need to be used to observe changes in weight, BMI, waist circumference, and stress.