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An Intervention to Promote Navajo Gardening, Nutrition, and Community Wellness

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ABSTRACT

The rates of diabetes and obesity in Navajo communities are higher than national rates. A healthy diet of fresh fruits and vegetables will help to prevent and reduce such rates. So the project focuses on promoting gardening to make vegetables and fruits more accessible at the comfort of one's own home. Previous research in this area shows that gardeners consume 2 more servings of fruits and vegetables than nongardeners. Thirty participants were recruited by flyer distribution at chapter houses, senior centers, and community centers, from four Navajo targeted areas: Shiprock, NM; Tsaile, AZ; Lukachukai, AZ, and Hogback, NM. With the involvement of the participants, we build gardens at each home. Once the garden is complete, the participants will independently maintain it, and monthly check ups will be conducted. Workshops on gardening techniques will be provided so that participants will be able to independently sustain their garden. Each participant had to sign a consent form prior to conducting any gardening activity. In addition, an interview and a survey was conducted with each participant. The survey questioned the participants' eating habits, focusing on the regularity of fruit and vegetable consumption, the consumption of sodas and other sugary drinks, etc. An additional two surveys will be conducted, one taken midway of the project and the other at the conclusion of the project. The three surveys dispersed throughout the project will document changes in the participants' eating habits. Our long term goal is increasing servings of vegetables and fruits consumed, and to ensure sustainable gardens at homes.

Key words: Diabetes, Obesity, Navajo communities, gardening

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