

POSTER ABSTRACTS

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Racial/Ethnic Differences in Factors Influencing Vegetable Consumption in the MENU Web-based Intervention Pilot Program

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Background: On average, African Americans eat fewer fruit and vegetables than all other ethnic/racial groups. We explored racial differences in participants of the pilot study for MENU, a Web-based intervention program designed to support increasing the dietary intake of vegetables.

Methods: Potential participants were mailed an invitation letter inviting them to the study's Web site. Eligible participants completed an initial survey relevant to the targeted behavior change. The survey evaluated perceived general health status, change in vegetable intake as adults, and motivation, barriers, and confidence related to increasing vegetable intake. For these analyses, respondents were subgrouped as African-American (AA) or White/Other. Responses to the survey were evaluated for racial/ethnic differences by gender.

Results: A total of 530 people enrolled in this study, including 28% AA women, 35% White women, 15% AA men, and 22% White men. Women and men perceived health status equally, and both White women and men rated their health as better than AA women and men. AA and White women were similar in confidence that they could eat more servings of vegetables (68% vs 62% very confident). More AA men were very confident (63%) compared to White men (46%). For all groups, the most frequently named barrier for eating more vegetables was fear of spoilage, and the most frequently named motivation for eating more vegetables was to feel healthier (84-90%) followed closely by weight management (70-87%). A higher proportion of AA women and men reported eating fewer vegetables now than when young. About 40% of women compared to 66% of men who are now eating more vegetables reported some or a lot of family encouragement to eat more. Nearly twice as many AA men compared to White men said they would be motivated to eat more vegetables if recommended by their physician.

Conclusions: Exploring differences among racial/ethnic groups is a way to better understand factors that influence dietary change. By identifying these factors, we may be able to specifically tailor intervention materials and improve efforts in changing eating behaviors.