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Addressing chronic disease risk factors among urban low-income adults: The role of nutrition education in community health centers

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Poor access to affordable and healthy food compels households with limited resources to stretch their food budget by purchasing inexpensive, high-calorie foods. Research evidence indicates that low-income and food insecure households are vulnerable to obesity and obesity related conditions due to factors such as limited resources, lack of access to healthy and affordable foods, greater exposure to marketing of obesity-promoting products and limited access to health care. This study examined chronic disease risk factors among low-income adults, while providing individualized nutrition education at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) Community Health Center in Evansville, Indiana, USA. This session will present the preliminary results obtained from anthropometric (weight, height, body mass index), dietary habits (weekly consumption of eight food groups to detect foods high in total fat, saturated and cholesterol) and clinical data (total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, fasting glucose, glucose A1C, blood pressure) of the study sample. Findings from this sample highlight the staggering rates of obesity and poor glucose A1C control as significant. Findings call attention to the need to provide sustained nutrition interventions to manage weight and blood glucose. It has been suggested that adults with highest risk for obesity-related complications are least likely to access weight-loss treatments due to lack of awareness or ability to afford the treatment. Research and practice implications will be discussed.

Biography

Serah W Theuri earned her PhD degree in Human Nutrition and completed her Dietetic Internship training from Mississippi State University. She is an Assistant Professor of Nutrition in the Food and Nutrition Program, College of Nursing and Health Professions, at the University of Southern Indiana, USA. She is a Registered Dietitian and a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is also a Member of the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior where she is serving in the Division of International Nutrition Education as Chair. Her research focuses on food access, obesity, nutrition assessment and intervention among underserved populations.

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