

## Utilising the Black Churches in the UK for health promotion: a nutrition intervention for first generation Ghanaian migrants in London

J. Adinkrah and D. Bhakta

Faculty of Life Sciences and Computing, London Metropolitan University, Holloway Road, London, N7 8DB, UK

Black and African Churches have been used successfully in the United States to deliver health promotion and interventions<sup>(1,2)</sup>. This study, to our knowledge, is the first in the UK to use the Black Churches setting as a vehicle for nutrition education and intervention. With the notion of churches been very important in the African community, it is hoped that this venue will aid in promoting and hopefully maintaining behavioural change in this population<sup>(3,4)</sup>.

A nutrition intervention programme was developed with input from focus groups of church congregants and the *Obesity Clinic* at the London Metropolitan University<sup>(4)</sup>. Participants were from two churches in Tower Hamlets and Newham. The church in Tower Hamlets served as the control and the other as the intervention. The control group were provided with a booklet on healthy eating, whereas the intervention group were asked to attend six sessions of nutrition education every week at the Church. The sessions included information on portion size control, eating out etc etc. Baseline measurements of anthropometry, socio-demography and dietary intake were taken and repeated at 6 weeks and 3 months. Dietary intake was assessed using a validated FFQ<sup>(5)</sup>.

**Table 1.** Body composition changes at 3 months

Outcome measures	Intervention (n = 23)					Control (n = 19)				
	Base line	SD	3 months	SD	P value	Base line	SD	3 months	SD	P value
Weight (kg)	72.6	1.3	70.3	8.7	0.001	68.1	3.8	67.2	2.0	0.023
BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	27.5	0.5	26.1	3.0	0.001	25.5	1.2	24.4	1.0	0.056
Waist circum. (cm)	91.6	1.2	88.6	1.6	0.003	90.1	5.6	88.5	4.2	0.017
Body fat (%)	29.2	2.3	27.2	2.1	0.001	27.1	3.9	26.4	4.4	0.060

**Table 2.** Dietary intake changes at 3 months

Outcome measures	Intervention (n = 23)					Control (n = 19)				
	Base line	SD	3 Months	SD	P value	Base line	SD	3 Months	SD	P value
Energy (g)	2022	282.4	1976	119.3	0.147	2072	384.5	2058	365	0.237
Protein (g)	67	24.4	70	19.3	0.079	70	30.0	67	15.9	0.596
Fat (g)	76	37.1	69	39.0	0.017	84	8.0	73	24.5	0.001
Carbohydrate (g)	268	23.2	269	56.9	0.580	280	96.7	274	67.2	0.377
Fibre (g)	17.1	4.5	18.9	3.7	0.074	16.9	5.0	14.2	3.9	0.072

We found that both the intervention and control group showed favourable changes of decrease in body weight, BMI, waist circumference and percentage body fat. The changes were significant for body fat and BMI for the intervention group at 3 months (Table 1). Energy, fat and salt intake also decreased in both groups (Table 2).

These preliminary findings show that a culturally sensitive church-based intervention programme can be an innovative way to educate and promote a healthier lifestyle.

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