

ABSTRACT

Background: Unhoused youth represent a significant proportion of the underserved population and face substantial nutritional challenges due to various factors, including lack of knowledge, food insecurity, and insufficient intake. Studies have examined nutritional deficiencies and implications on health of unhoused youth, however the effect of nutritional education on dietary patterns of unhoused youth has not been fully evaluated.

Objective: The aim of this project is to implement nutrition classes at Urban Peak, a homeless shelter for youth ages 15-24, and evaluate the impact of nutritional education on the nutritional status and dietary patterns of this population.

Methods: Following discussions with Urban Peak youth and staff, the project will rotate through eight weekly lesson plans focused on particular topics from nutritional education. Prior to the lesson, participants will complete a “Pre-Survey” to assess their current understanding about the topic. After the lesson is completed, participants will then complete a “Post-Survey” to evaluate their understanding and retention of subject matter. Nutritional status and dietary patterns will be further evaluated qualitatively in additional “Post-Surveys” administered one month following each lesson. This project will focus on the first four lesson plans and the data respectively collected.

Conclusion: Following completion of the first four lessons, it is clear that the majority of youth have a rudimentary understanding of nutritional concepts and retain a significant proportion of the lesson materials. However, given the high turnover rate of youths at Urban Peak, there is a significant limitation in analysis of long-term nutritional status and

dietary patterns, and the post-survey at the one month timepoint was unable to be administered. Additionally, more barriers have been identified after thematic analysis of participants' responses, most importantly accessibility to healthy foods. In spite of these challenges, we remain optimistic that youth will have the knowledge to make more informed decisions about their nutrition when given the choice and be cognizant of the impact of their diet on their health. With Urban Peak now established as a "Service Learning" site, we aim to build upon the longitudinal relationship between CU School of Medicine and Urban Peak to offer guidance and mentorship to the youth beyond nutrition.

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