



# On the Run: Food and Fitness

A Community-Oriented Primary Care  
Project on Adolescent Exercise and  
Nutrition in Sycamore, Illinois

Fall 2001

# Objectives

- ◆ Assess adolescent knowledge and attitudes toward physical fitness and healthy eating
- ◆ Assess parents' knowledge and attitudes toward physical fitness and healthy eating
- ◆ Offer educational sessions to both adolescents and parents on nutrition and exercise

# Methods

- ◆ Community experts were interviewed and recruited, including local Dept of Public Health, Univ of IL extension, local YMCA
- ◆ Surveys developed based on proven model
- ◆ Programs developed in cooperation with local experts, targeting our group of adolescents, as well as their parents
- ◆ Programs implemented—2 offered on weeknight, 1 as an independent assignment

# Programs

- ◆ Reading food labels/Scavenger Hunt

We taught the students how to read a food label, then assigned them a scavenger hunt to complete with their parents at any local grocery store.

- Family Fitness Night in cooperation with the YMCA

YMCA instructors introduced families to stretching exercises and aerobics.

- Food on the Run-Family Nutrition Night

This program was a “food circuit” with 4 stations manned by registered dietitians and 2 other local professionals.

# Results

## *Adolescents*

- \*Higher report of eating fruit, vegetables, and dairy products than parental estimates
- \*32 % report being “overweight”
- \*63% report trying to lose weight at time of survey
- \*82% reported main source of exercise related to daily P.E. class

# More results...

## *Parents*

- ◆ 50% identified themselves as overweight
- ◆ 38% exercise regularly
- ◆ 90% felt time restraint was the major barrier to exercise
- ◆ 90% interested in after school fitness program for their child
- ◆ 10% report their family exercises together

# Further results...

- ◆ Excellent support and interest from school district
- ◆ Located several community experts in fitness and nutrition
- ◆ Identified many community resources: YMCA, Univ of IL Extension, Public Health Dept, NIU faculty

# Future directions

- ◆ Explore having after school fitness programs
- ◆ Use school newsletter to educate on fitness/nutrition issues
- ◆ Address major barrier to family exercise, namely, TIME
- ◆ Assess school lunch and snack menu