

Spin & Learn:

Informal, Interactive Learning in Community-based Health Literacy

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Project Summary

The aim of the project was to improve participant's health information-seeking behavior. As a community-based health literacy intervention¹ this project targeted primarily pregnant and breastfeeding African American women who participate in a Baby Cafe program, including the staff who are certified lactation counselors. The secondary target population was partners and relatives of the participants. The women and their supporters attend the Baby Cafe primarily to learn about breastfeeding. The workshop format included an interactive activity using raffle tickets and a prize wheel to engage participants in improving their ability to understand and use reliable health information resources from the National Library of Medicine (NLM) by answering predetermined questions.

Goal & Objectives

The goal of this project was to improve awareness and knowledge about NLM resources by training participants including staff of the Baby Café.



Outcome-based objectives:

1. By the end of each interactive learning session at least 80% of participants will report increased awareness and knowledge about MedlinePlus and LactMed.
2. By the end of each interactive learning session at least 80% of participants will indicate that they can search and find information using MedlinePlus and LactMed.
3. By the end of each interactive learning session at least 80% of participants will indicate that they will use MedlinePlus and/or LactMed in the future.

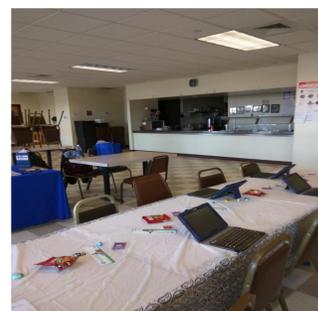
Process objective:

1. By the end of the project period at least four 2-hour in-person, interactive learning sessions on MedlinePlus and LactMed will be held.



Methods

- A table exhibit was set-up with information on MedlinePlus and LactMed including a tablet computer where the resources were displayed, a prize wheel, and baskets with questions on slips of paper.
- The tablets were set-up on the tables with open tabs for MedlinePlus and LactMed.
- Before and after each training session participants were given a pre- and post- test (survey) to complete.
- Brochures were distributed and each resource described before participants had a turn to spin the prize wheel.
- In addition to options to select a question from a basket for MedlinePlus or LactMed, the prize wheel included the option to win raffle tickets and other prizes.
- Once the participants had selected a question they were instructed to explore the resources in order to answer the question.
- The instructor helped participants navigate the tablets and resources, including further explaining each resource and providing searching tips or strategies.
- Participants were given raffle tickets for each question they completed and for completing the pre- and post-tests.



Outcomes

- The training had 13 unique participants, a total of 14 participants for three of the four scheduled sessions.
- Pretesting indicated that 79% of participants had not heard of MedlinePlus and 93% had not heard of LactMed.
- In addition, prior to training, 93% of participants had not used either MedlinePlus or LactMed, and accordingly 86% indicated no ability in searching either resource.
- The post-test indicated that 86% of participants had at least moderate ability to searching either resource.
- After training, 93% of participants would use MedlinePlus in the future, while 71% would use LactMed. The low future use of LactMed indicator maybe contributed to the low participation rate of Baby Café participants; pregnant or breastfeeding mothers.



Lessons Learned

- One problem encountered during the training was that some of the participants needed more help than anticipated with navigating the tablet or browser environment. Therefore, for this reason and because it was more effort than expected to facilitate both the training and the prize wheel activity; for future training sessions I would limit the number of participants or include an assistant.
- Training sessions lasted for at least one hour where most participants had a chance to spin the wheel often to select MedlinePlus or LactMed questions, but a few participants because of limited time only had the chance to work with one database. I designed questions specifically for each database, although some questions could be answered using both. Thus, in both scenarios and with time permitting I would encourage participants to try answering questions in both databases just to insure that everyone had a chance to work with both.

Conclusion

Facilitating the raffle and prize giveaway was worth the extra effort because it unexpectedly increased engagement where participants had fun while learning.

During one of the training sessions the program director recruited church members who were leaving their meeting to participate in the training by explaining that they would only have to participate for fifteen minutes, but to our surprise they were so excited about learning about the resources and the opportunity to spin the prize wheel that they stayed for about an hour. One participant even expressed interest in scheduling training for another group that she is involved. In addition, I was surprised when participants asked if they could take the slips of papers with their question and answer home. Other comments from participant included: "this was fun; I learned a lot;" "when are you doing this again;" and "I thought this was going to be boring."

Overall, the project did accomplish proposed goals and objectives by increasing awareness and knowledge of MedlinePlus and LactMed and participants searching ability, including inspiring participants to use the resources in the future.



Reference

1. Community-based health literacy intervention; defined as any purposeful, organized activity to help a group of people find, understand, use, or communicate about health information, services, or issues for themselves or their communities (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. *Community-based health literacy interventions: Proceedings of a workshop*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press).

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