



Healthy Tomorrows for Teens A Mid-course Evaluation

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Healthy Tomorrows for Teens

LOOK GOOD--FEEL GOOD--DO GOOD!

- Five-year (2007-2012) program funded by the Maternal Child Health Bureau and American Academy of Pediatrics' Healthy Tomorrows Partnership program
- Target Population: Adolescent girls enrolled in New Britain high school (3129 students: CT's largest hs)
- Portfolio of activities, including; nutritional counseling, YWCA fitness programs and community service learning and leadership projects



Healthy Tomorrows Community: Adolescent Girls at NBHS

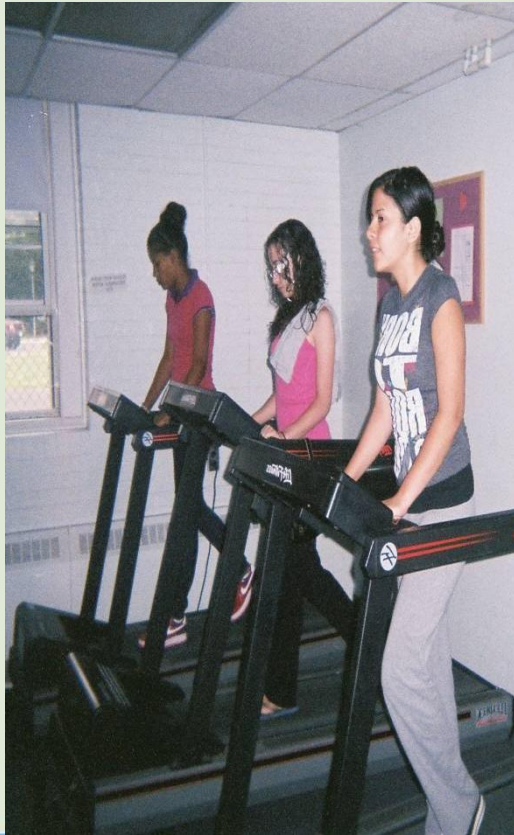
Profile of NBHS Students (2007-08 DOE report)

- 71.8% minority
 - 52.3 % Hispanic (*predominately Puerto Rican*)
 - 17.5% Black
 - 28.2% Caucasian (many Polish immigrants)
 - Over 40% of students from homes where English is not the primary language
- 47.7 % eligible for free/reduced-price lunch
- 26.1 % drop out rate (*4X state avg. 6.2%*)
- Teen pregnancy rate (2008): 17.7% overall; 26.5% for Latinas
- Statewide data show Latina teens more likely to be sexually active, have intercourse w/ 4 or more partners & initiate sex before age 13



Barriers to Healthy Lifestyles for Latinas at NBHS: 9th Grade Survey

- 561 students completed U-Conn survey on eating/PA activities in May 2008: 117 were Latina females
- Latinas more likely to be dissatisfied with weight compared to African American & white peers
- Latinas most likely to be obese: 18% vs. 9% of African American & 0% of whites
- Latinas least likely to be physically active
 - 21% never get dressed for gym vs. 7.5% of African Americans
 - 54% failed gym/health at least once compared to 19% of whites
 - 33% involved in team sport vs. 51% of whites





Research Questions Arising from Survey Results

- How to increase PA and other healthy behaviors without promoting negative body image?
- What type of physical activities would be enjoyable/acceptable given cultural and developmental preferences?
- How to make gym class more acceptable?





Why a Mid-course Evaluation?

- Latinas are attracted to Healthy Tomorrows and give high ratings to all activities but that has not translated into consistent participation and engagement.
- A primary purpose of the Salud America evaluation is to understand and overcome barriers to consistent engagement by Latina teens and increase their level of physical activity.
- Provide partners (YWCA, NB High School, NB Spanish Speaking Center) with useful information that they can apply to performance improvements within and collaborations between their organizations



How will our Partners Benefit from Salud America?

- YWCA
 - Undergoing a \$12.5 million renovation (completion 2011 or 2012)
 - Findings used to plan expanded services targeting Latino community.
- Spanish Speaking Center
 - SSC is facing severe budget cuts, including decision by Governor to eliminate funds for food pantry
 - Findings used to support grant requests and lobby for restored funding; research training will improve SSC staff advocacy skills
- New Britain High School
 - Over half of Latina teens fail PE (54%)
 - Findings will be used to make PE more acceptable to Latinas & to engage them in other activities (e.g., service learning) that may help address school failure, high pregnancy rates



Research Framework

- Youth development model
 - Emphasis on assets/not risks
- Community based participatory research
 - Community and teens as co-researchers
 - Action oriented
- Methodology
 - Focus groups
 - Interviews
 - Photovoices



Salud America Research Team:

L to R: Cassandra Negron, Shiara Negron, Ebony Lopez,
Monica Little, Jessy Velez

Back row: Paula Leibovitz, R.D.; Jayme Hannay, Ph.D., MPH





Research Design

- Focus group/interviews/Photovoices: 5 Puerto Rican teens enrolled in Summer Youth Employment program (July-August 2009)
- Five focus groups with Latino parents (35-40 parents recruited through SSC) (Fall 09)
- Five focus groups with Latina teens (35-40 teens recruited at NBHS)
 - 3 with HTT participants
 - 2 with non-participants
- Exit interviews with 4-5 long term HTT participants (18-24 months)



Photovoices

- Five Latina teens (15-16) completed Photovoices project July-August 2009
- Successful strategy for engaging teens in action-oriented research on eating and physical activity
- Took individual photos that answered 3 “framing questions”
- Engaged in group activity to organize photos into collective “story”
- Presented project at Spanish Speaking & CHC Advisory Board



Photovoices Presentation at SSC





Photovoices Presentation to Advisory Board

