Health Needs Assessment of Native American Students at New Mexico State University

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

I, Eugena Armijillo, DO NOT have a financial interest/arrangement or affiliation with one or more organizations that could be perceived as a real or apparent conflict of interest in the context of the subject of this presentation.
Learning Objectives

- The participant will be able to identify at least 2 barriers to healthy lifestyles among Native American students.

- The participant will be able to identify at least one perception of healthcare coverage among Native American students.

- The participant will be able to identify at least two factors contributing to stress among Native American students.

Native American Health Disparities

- Low access to healthy foods

- Lack of infrastructure and recreation areas

- Indian Health Service (IHS)
  - Limited resources and specialists

- Low Socioeconomic Status (SES)

- Language/Cultural barriers
Challenges for Native American College Students

- Distance to tribal lands
- Family & Culture
- Minority status in student demographics
  - 2.3% of NMSU student population
- Risk factors in college students
- Barriers to healthcare

Campus Life

- Academic Demands
  - Majors
  - Time
- American Indian Student Center
  - Mission
  - Purpose
Present Study

- Purpose: To assess the health needs of Native American (NA) students attending NMSU
  - Goal: design effective and targeted interventions to improve the health and academic outcomes

- Focus group questions assessed barriers and needs in relation to:
  - Physical Activity
  - Eating Habits
  - Stress
  - Healthcare

Methods

- Recruitment
  - Announcements at AISC and NMSU student hotline

- Subjects: 22 NMSU Native American Students
  - Separate focus groups for men & women

- Procedure
  - Consent > Questionnaire>FG Discussion> Gift Card

- Data Analysis
  - Thematic analysis (3 reviewers)
Results: Physical Activity (PA)

- Barriers to physical activity
  - Academics Demands
  - Overcrowding at Activity Center
  - Time Barriers
- Student recommendations
  - Updated/more equipment and extended hours at SAC
  - Workouts in groups or with partner (motivation)
  - Structured outdoor activities (e.g., hiking)

Results: Healthy Eating

- Barriers to healthy eating
  - Finances/money/cost
  - Access to healthy foods
  - Eating on the go/time limitations
- Recommendations to promoting healthy eating
  - Healthier options on campus
  - Lower prices
  - Informational sources/knowledge of healthy options
Results: Stress

- Factors contributing to stress
  - Academic/Work
  - Finances
  - Family/Culture

- Recommendations for resources to manage stress
  - Culturally tailored services/counseling
  - Structured recreational/other activities (outdoor)
  - Workshops (e.g., time management; motivational)

Results: Healthcare

- Barriers to healthcare
  - Distance to IHS/ negative experiences with IHS
  - Finances/costs
  - Working it out alone/OTC medications

- Cultural influences on health beliefs and practices
  - Retain beliefs/practices in traditional medicine
    - medicine men; herbal remedies; ceremonies
  - Tribes and pueblos endorsed Western Medicine and promoted engagement in prevention practices
    - Desire to overcome unhealthy practices/patterns in NAs
Conclusion

- Awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle
  - Barriers exist (e.g. easy access to unhealthy fast food, limited finances, time barriers, loneliness, academic stress).

- Continuance of study
  - Data collection

- End goal: Findings from this study will assist in developing lifestyle interventions for Native American students guided by recommendations provided by the participants.

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Citations/References