

TIME MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE: BARRIERS TO DIETARY
CHANGE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

D.L. Baham, M.S., R.D., L.D., C.R. Teal, M.A., B. Gor, Ed.D., R.D., L.D.,
M.S. Hall, Ph.D.; L. D. Knowles, BA , A. J. Lewis, K. P. Hodges, MS, J. Chilton, DrPH;

L.A. Jones, Ph.D

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Department of Health Disparities Research

Houston, Texas 77030

Pre-menopausal African-American (AA) women have a higher incidence of and mortality rate from breast cancer than all other ethnic groups. A low-fat, high fiber diet coupled with high fruit and vegetable consumption has been demonstrated to be protective for many cancers. Few nutrition programs developed for African Americans have focused on younger, pre-menopausal AA women and cancer. The research objective was to develop a culturally appropriate dietary intervention for pre-menopausal AA women. Six focus groups assessed modifications necessary in educational approaches to dietary change. Questions included beliefs, perceptions and barriers regarding nutrition and health. Thirty-eight pre-menopausal AA women between ages of 25 and 45 participated. They represented a range of middle-incomes and diverse educational backgrounds. Content analysis techniques, utilizing an expert review panel of four dietitians, were used to determine the primary themes in the focus group transcripts. Time management and social influences (e.g., family and friends) were identified by participants as two primary barriers for changing their dietary habits. These findings resulted in significant changes in the curriculum. Additional classes were added to address time management specific to dietary change and to teach behavior analytic techniques so that participants could identify and address those influences on their eating behavior. A dietary intervention curriculum for this population needs to address the primary barriers or issues facing the targeted population. These findings suggest that the barriers to dietary change facing pre-menopausal, urban African American women with middle incomes may not be that different than other ethnic or racial groups.