FOOD AND NUTRITION-RELATED BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, PRACTICES, AND PERCEIVED NEEDS OF FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IN VIRGINIA

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of the present study was to gain insight on the real and perceived needs of food stamp recipients for use in developing nutrition education programs. Six focus group interviews with 26 food stamp recipients were conducted in six Virginia counties. Transcripts of the meetings were analyzed to identify themes prevalent in all of the focus group interviews. Ninety-two 24-hour food recalls from a different sub-group of food stamp recipients were also analyzed for food consumption frequencies, trends in food preparation, and common food purchasing locations. A key finding was that most focus group participants made food-related decisions while in the grocery store. Explanations for incidences of food resource scarcities included beliefs that the amount of food stamps was insufficient and that poor food purchasing decisions were made. Predominant food behavior changes that had been previously attempted were decreasing consumption of fat and fried foods and reducing portion sizes. Most of the reasons for attempting those behavior changes involved a desire for weight loss. Prevalent nutrition education interests were low-fat cooking and child nutrition. Results of the 24-hour food recall analysis indicated an inadequate consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grain cereals, and dairy products. Seventy-five percent of the subjects purchased food in a grocery store and prepared meals at home.
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