The ‘Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids’ community program: Promoting family health through sustainable school and community partnerships

University of Newcastle

Background
- Obesity affects 70% of men and 25-30% of children in the Upper Hunter of NSW.
- Childhood obesity prevention is a public health priority but the contribution of fathers’ influence on children’s physical activity and eating behaviour is often overlooked.
- The ‘Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids’ (HDHK) pilot RCT was a feasible and highly efficacious approach for improved health in overweight dads and improved lifestyle behaviours in children.

The next stage is to implement the evidence-based HDHK program in a sustainable community setting in a larger effectiveness trial.

Scope of the Project
Objective: To help overweight fathers reduce their heart disease risk profile while helping families promote physical activity and healthy eating for their children.

Service Delivery and Evaluation:
- Year 1-Phase 1: Setting up framework
  - Refine previous pilot program;
  - Develop resources (facilitator manual, participant workbook, data collection procedure and recruitment manual)
- Year 2-Phase 2: the preliminary trial
  - Program delivered by researchers in Term 2, 2010 at 1 Singleton primary school to produce training manual and DVD.
  - Conduct cluster RCT with 4 matched schools (program run by trained facilitators) in Term 3, 2010. Use wait-list control group.

Evaluation
- Year 1
  - Preliminary trial in Singleton
    - Asset mapping & community consultation
    - Resource development
    - Family inclusive activities
    - Train-the-trainer workshops
    - Sustainability plan & focus

- Year 2
  - Multi-site Delivery in 4 other local government areas
    - Local steering committee
    - Train-the-trainer workshops
    - Sustainability plan & focus

- Year 3
  - 'Train the Trainer' workshops will be run by the project team for local facilitators.
  - Implement program in larger effectiveness trial across 4 local government areas.

Method & Intervention
The program aims to:
- Prevent obesity in children
- Help fathers achieve a healthy weight
- Encourage physical activity and healthy eating for families
- Increase engagement between fathers and their children

Intervention Components
- 3 Dads Only sessions
- 3 Dads/Kids interactive sessions
- Access to study website; program resources
- Program grounded in Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory

Yields 2 & 3: Phase 3: Project rolled out
- 'Train the Trainer' workshops will be run by the project team for local facilitators.
- Implement program in larger effectiveness trial across 4 local government areas.

Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Quantities</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Improved cardiovascular health; improved quality of life; improved mental health; greater engagement with children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Improved physical and psychological health through increased physical activity levels and healthy eating; increased self esteem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Positive changes to their physical activity and dietary behaviours; improved physical/mental health and quality of life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Healthier children and improved educational outcomes; greater engagement with families; increased community partnerships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local areas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strengthening school-community partnerships; healthier and more productive workforce; increased community capacity; increased access to education and training; improved outcomes for children; reduction in the burden of disease and direct/indirect health costs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local leaders</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Increased access to education &amp; training; community leadership development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C &amp; A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership with HMRI/University of Newcastle; association with an internationally significant program; benefits to employees.</td>
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Project Potential
- Demonstrate sustainability, long-term impact, community benefit and state and national relevance.
- The key to this program’s sustainability lies in our ability to train health/education leaders in each community to implement the program over the long term.
- This, along with the training and implementation resources, will provide the basis for gaining support for investment in these strategies by other interested communities, and more importantly governments and policy makers.

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