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PENNSYLVANIA WIC EDUCATORS AFFIRM NEED FOR FOLIC ACID EDUCATION OF LOW-INCOME, SNAP-ED ELIGIBLE WOMEN

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needscenter.org



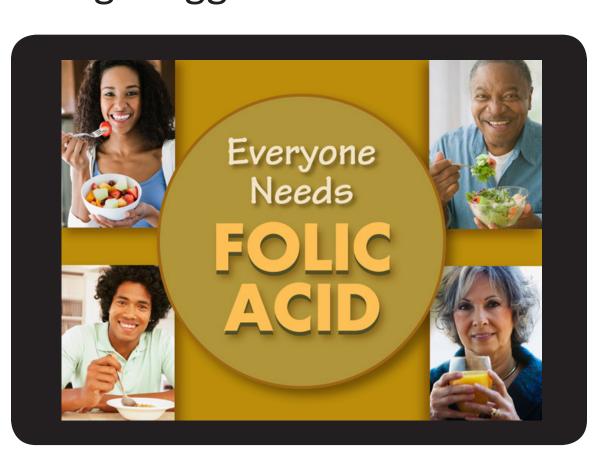


Abstract

Background: Nutrition education research typically focuses on the program's acceptance and usefulness with the target audience, but sustainable programs must be valued by the nutrition educator for its positive impact on their work. Everyone Needs Folic Acid is a colorful, simple nutrition education program delivered by digital photo frame platform or video intended to help low-income persons appreciate the role of folic acid for all age groups.

Objective: To describe Women Infant and Children (WIC) educator practices related to folic acid prior to impact assessment of *Everyone Needs Folic Acid* on WIC educator practices. Methods: Face-to-Face (n=8) or telephone (n=13) interviews with nutrition educators (n=21) from WIC clinics serving Western (n=6) and Central (n=6) Pennsylvania. **Results:** Using a 5-point scale, educators reported strong interest in folic acid (mean=3.88, SD=0.93), and rated it highly important during pregnancy (mean=4.95, SD=0.22). Handouts and/or discussion were the sole method(s) of education reported. Only 43% received client-initiated folic acid questions/requests and they rated WIC participant interest as low (mean=2.88/5.00, SD=0.89).

Conclusions: WIC educators affirmed the need for nutrition education focused on folic acid, but findings suggest that novel delivery methods are needed to enhance client interest.





Background

Everyone Needs Folic Acid is a digital photo frame program developed considering tenets of the Consumer Information Processing Model and carefully designed for individuals with basic reading skills ¹.

Previous study of *Everyone Needs Folic Acid* with low-income audiences revealed a positive response and supports that the program was understandable, interesting, useful, and sensitive to audience demographics ². Furthermore, nutrition education delivered with digital photo frame technology has demonstrated to be feasible, useful and of interest to low-income persons ³. Nutrition education research typically focuses on intervention acceptance and usefulness with the target audience. However, to be sustainable, programs must be valued by the nutrition educator for its positive impact on their work.

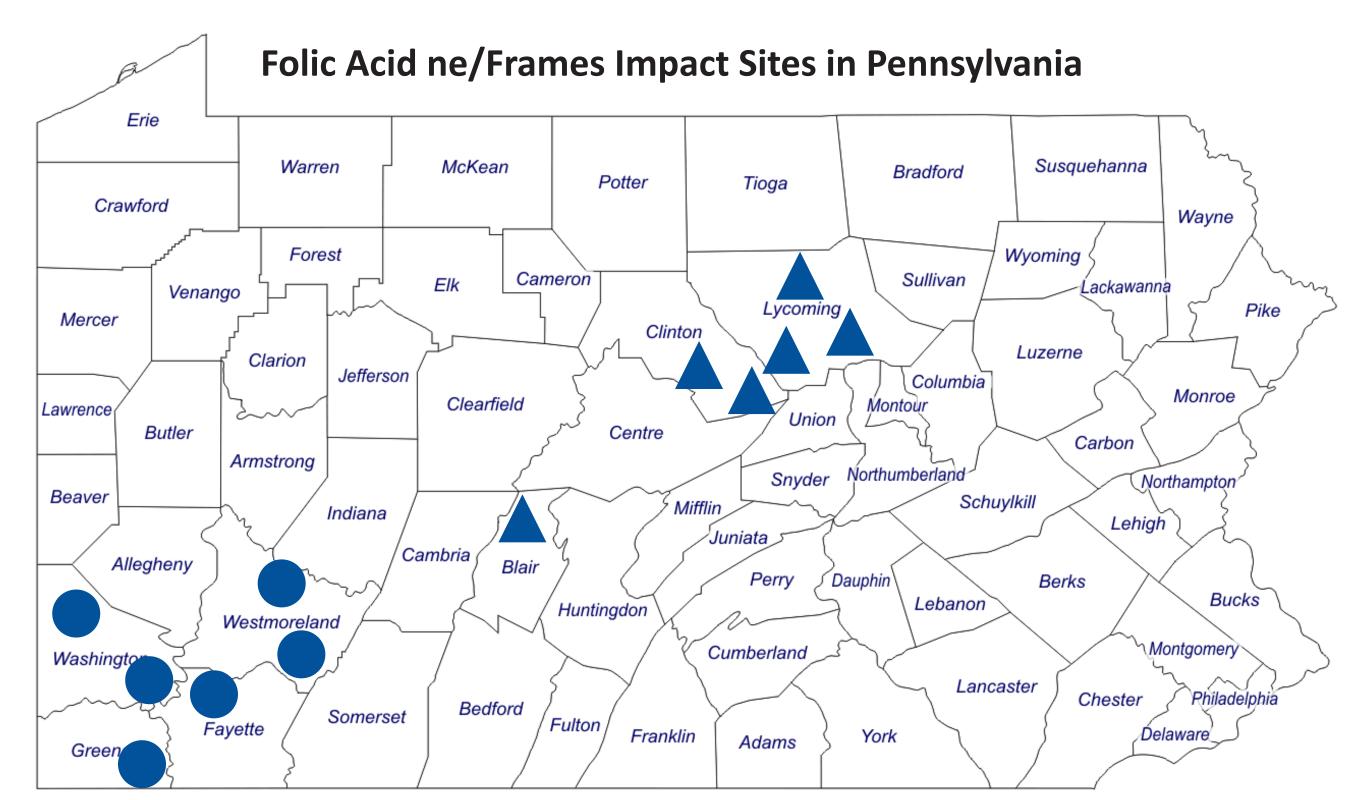
Objective

To describe practices of educators in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) related to folic acid prior to impact assessment of *Everyone Needs Folic Acid* on WIC educator practices.



Methods

Face-to-Face (n=8) or telephone (n=13) interviews with nutrition educators (n=21) from WIC clinics serving Western (n=6) and Central (n=6) Pennsylvania were conducted. The interviews documented educator demographics, educator and client interest in folic acid or sodium-related topics and typical nutrition education practices of the WIC educators. All interviews were audio-recorded for subsequent analysis.



Results

Nearly all educators self-identified race as White, and reported a Bachelor's degree as the highest level of education. Educators were experienced and mean time employed at current clinic suggested stable employment.

Clinic and Demographic Characteristics of Participating WIC Educators	
	n (unless noted)
Clinics	12
Clinic Geographic Location Western Pennsylvania Central Pennsylvania Educators, total Educators, Western Pennsylvania Educators, Central Pennsylvania	6 6 21 10 11
Years Practicing as an Educator ¹	17.4 ± 12.7 y
Years Practicing as an Educator at Current Clinic ¹	11.9 ± 10.3 y
Highest Level of Education Associate's Bachelor's Master's	1 18 2
Professional Credentials Registered Dietitian Registered Nurse IBCLC ²	2 1 1
Race White More than 1 race reported	20 1

² IBCLC = International Board Certified Lactation Consultant

to child health during pregnancy: 1,2

Describe the method of education you

6 (29%) Discussion, n (%) 15 (71%) Discussion and handouts, n (%)

9 (43) Yes, n (%) 12 (57)

Results

Using a 5-point scale, educators reported:

- ✓ Strong interest in folic acid
- ✓ Belief that folic acid was highly important during pregnancy
- ✓ Use of handouts and/or discussion as the sole method(s) of education
- ✓ Infrequency of client-initiated questions/ requests about folic acid
- ✓ Low WIC participant interest in folic acid

WIC Educator Responses to Baseline Interview

How important do you think folic acid is 4.95 ± 0.2



use with clients:

Rate your clients' interest in folic acid: 1,2

Do you receive questions or information requests on folic acid?

No, n (%)

¹ mean ± SD
 ² Results reported on 5-point scale, 1= low, 5= high

Sample Interview Script

*Avoid "OK" or other affirmations after the response is given.

3. How many topics do you usually cover with a client?

5. Describe the method of education you use with clients (prompt with examples only if

On average, what percent of information that you provide to clients relates to sodium?

Do you receive questions or information requests about sodium? YES NO

specifically on information related to sodium? YES NO

aggestions you can offer for improving WIC education on sodium.

ou familiar with the use of digital photo frames to deliver nutrition education, such

familiar with digital photo frames? YES NO

10. Describe the types of information on folic acid that you provide to your clients.

Describe the types of information on sodium that you provide to your clients.

If yes, explain the questions or information requests that you receiv

Conclusions

WIC educators affirmed the need for nutrition education focused on folic acid, but the findings indicated that educators typically employed discussion and/or handouts as their delivery method, and client interest was low.

Novel delivery methods, such as digital photo frame programs, may enhance client interest. Future steps will discern the impact of Everyone Needs Folic Acid on educator practices as a critical consideration for developing and delivering effective and sustainable programs.

References

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- 2. Chen F, Wamboldt P, Lohse B. Everyone Needs Folic Acid is a digital program with face and content validity for low-income diverse audiences. FASEB J. April 2014 28:807.4.
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