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795 - IMPACT OF FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION ON THE COOKING SKILLS OF ADULTS AND SENIORS AT MENU PROJECT

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Resumen

Background/Objectives: Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) strategies that encourage cooking are important to promoting healthy habits and strengthening food autonomy. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of FNE interventions on the cooking skills (CS) of adults and older adults.

Methods: This was an intervention study with a control group (CG), using a qualitative-quantitative approach. Forty-three individuals aged ≥ 40 years participated, with 28 in the intervention group (IG) and 15 in the CG. Four in-person meetings were held featuring hands-on-cooking workshops. The content and learning dynamics were based on the MeNu Project - Culinary Medicine and Nutrition in Health Care materials and the recommendations of the Food Guide for the Brazilian Population. CS were assessed using the Brazilian Cooking Skills Questionnaire (BCSQ) three times: immediately before the intervention (T0), after three (T3) and six months (T6) of the end. The BCSQ evaluates behavioral, attitudinal, and culinary self-efficacy domains to classify CS as low (20-43), medium (44-73), or high (74-100) CS. To assess the quality of each workshop, a Likert scale questionnaire (1-5 points) was administered at the end of workshops. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS version 24.0 software, using the Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) model, with a significance level of 5%.

Results: Participants were predominantly female (86.0%), with mean age of 60.6 ± 10.1 years. CS score was 82.1 ± 9.2 at T0, with 60.5% classified as high CS. Higher scores of some CS domains was observed in the IG (group effect by GEE analysis) compared to CG, like culinary attitudes (Wald = 5.27; $p = 0.02$), attitudes toward preparing fruits and vegetables (Wald = 4.99; $p = 0.03$), knowledge of culinary terms and techniques (Wald = 7.00; $p < 0.01$), and overall cooking skills (Wald = 4.03; $p = 0.05$). There was no difference when group vs. time interaction was analyzed, suggesting both groups showed similar CS scores over six months. Workshops were highly rated, with most participants assigning maximum scores for content, methodology, planning and motivation.

Conclusions/Recommendations: The absence of differential longitudinal effects may be explained by the high baseline CS scores, as well as short intervention duration and small sample size. Even so, culinary workshops showed high acceptability and potential as FNE strategies to strengthen engagement with cooking practices. Future studies with larger samples, longer follow-up and populations with lower baseline CS are recommended.

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