WAVE Pilot Study: Creation of Education Tools to Promote Proper Body Composition and Body Image Awareness

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Background

The WAVE–Ripples for Change: Obesity Prevention in High School Soccer Players research project is a 5-Y USDA funded project focused on building healthy nutrition, physical activity (PA) and life skills for healthy weight maintenance. The intervention includes providing face-to-face sport nutrition, physical activity and life skills education to high school soccer players. Two different versions of the intervention are being tested: Wave ~ Ripples for Change: Obesity Prevention in High School Soccer Players and Wave ~ Ripples for Change: Obese Prevention in High School Soccer Players. Results from the pre-intervention survey has indicated that both male and female soccer players are more interested in being thin and small stature, which can lead to disordered eating and body image issues. Inappropriate diet and exercise recommendations. For the females, the lesson focuses on understanding body composition, including appropriate diet and exercise recommendations. For the males, the lesson focuses on understanding body composition, including appropriate diet and exercise recommendations. The WAVE curriculum is unique in that it was created to focus specifically on HS athletes, and incorporates healthy life skills to help disentangle the myths about body size and sport performance. Athletes also need an appropriate ‘reference’ for a healthy athletic body size demonstrating that body size and fat levels can vary widely for various sports (Healthy body fat ranges: 14-24% women and 17-21% men). Current sport nutrition programs focus more on depression in youth or eating disorder issues. Disordered eating is discussed, the focus is developing healthy lifestyles, including a realistic body image and size.

Objective

Develop two lessons to educate HS youth soccer players (age 14-19y) on body composition and body image:

1) For males, the focus is body weight and composition, and factors related to building/retaining muscle mass to reduce risk of inappropriate diet and supplement use;

2) For females, the focus is body image and associated issues about body weight and performance to reduce the risk of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating.

Method

First, the research literature was reviewed and key body composition/ image issues unique to males and females were identified, especially for active HS youth. Second, two different lessons were developed to encompass the needs of each gender utilizing sport specific photos, online capabilities and common misconceptions about food, exercise and body size that athletes encounter. The lessons will be ‘piloted’ with the WAVE pilot HS soccer players. Key lesson objectives will be shared with soccer coaches and parents.

Results

For the females, the lesson focuses on understanding body composition and image, and how inappropriate beliefs about body shape and size increases the risk of body dissatisfaction. Approaches to improve body image and satisfaction are presented and discussed. For the males, the lesson focuses on understanding body composition, how it is measured, impact of body composition on health and performance, and beliefs that improve body composition, including appropriate diet and exercise recommendations. For the females, WAVE Ripples includes discussions on the impact of body composition on health and performance, and beliefs that improve body composition, including appropriate diet and exercise recommendations. For the males, WAVE Ripples includes discussions on the impact of body composition on health and performance, and beliefs that improve body composition, including appropriate diet and exercise recommendations.

Discussion

Piloting of these lessons will occur with HS soccer athletes in Fall 2015, followed by discussions with students, coaches and parents. Feedback about lesson length, content and follow-up lessons will help inform the final lesson draft, which will be used for the WAVE intervention.

References

1. Rong H, Harris JR. The growing body: Body image and eating disorder symptomatology among female athletes from business functions.

2. A comparison between female and male athletes on attitudes toward female and male body images.

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