

Pulse Positive: An educational campaign to increase awareness and consumption by integrating pulses into Elementary Schools

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SPG Contributions	Project Status	Duration/Timeline of Project (Year to Year)	Co-funders	Total Project Cost
\$63,000.00	Completed	August 2018 – July 2021	Mitacs	\$120,000.00

Project Description

For proper growth and development, it is essential that children consume healthy food and beverages. Consumption of pulses is beneficial to young children to improve their growth and development as they get different types of nutrient from it such as protein, folates, low glycemic carbohydrates, fiber, and micronutrients such as iron and zinc. Its low fat and high protein content also help in weight management and reduces the obesity of young generation. An earlier intervention "Starting Young with Pulses: Integrating Pulses into the Menus of Childcare Centres" was conducted in Saskatoon from 2015-2017 with pre-school aged students with the aim of promoting healthy eating behavior by incorporating pulses in their food menu and found the impetus for this research. The success of that intervention exhibits that pulses are acceptable to the young generation who find it delicious and that it can be introduced to their diet using recipes for different preparations by engaging children in various activities. Therefore, it is assumed that similar intervention will also benefit the older aged children (elementary school). Research shows that if healthy eating habits can be built among the elementary school students (which is a critical stage of life to establish any behavior) by developing and implementing school based healthy eating program, the habit will eventually be sustained and continued into the adulthood. Therefore, to improve the healthy eating behavior of children of grades 4-8 and considering the nutrient content of pulses, the researchers from the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, University of Saskatchewan carefully designed Pulse Positive: An educational campaign to increase awareness and consumption by integrating pulses into elementary schools – a pulse-based nutrition education intervention targeting the grade 4-8 students. The purpose of this research was to provide baseline information of the students participating Pulse Positive intervention with regard to self-reported knowledge, attitude, practice and barrier to pulses consumption.

Outcome

Research findings: Students have considerable knowledge on pulses as half of the students (50%) correctly answered 10 out of 15 knowledge questions. Mean knowledge score was higher in female students than male. Significant positive correlation was found between knowledge and attitude and pulses consumption and attitude. Majority (86%) of the students consume pulses although not in very frequent manner; and students expressed favorable attitude towards eating pulses. Preference of other foods over pulses appeared as a barrier reported by most of the students (30.8%).

Other outcomes: This study served as a baseline to evaluate the intervention Pulse Positive: An educational campaign to increase awareness and consumption by integrating pulses into elementary schools. In addition, an abstract was submitted for Micronutrient Forum 2020.

Research Objective

OBJECTIVE 1

Behaviour change intervention (BCI) strategy on pulse consumption and purchasing decisions.

OBJECTIVE 4

To disseminate findings and make recommendations that support healthy eating in schools including pulses.

OBJECTIVE 2

To design and carry out a multi-component, school-wide campaign.

OBJECTIVE 3

To assess the impact of educational campaign on increasing consumption.