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Abstract Title: Microgreens Outreach in the Community - Applying a Novel Diet-Related Disease Prevention Tool

Introduction: Obesity, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke have steadily increased in the United States and pose an alarming threat. Individual, family, and community intervention strategies are critical for the prevention and management of these diet-related diseases. Therefore, it is important to develop new preventative methods to further engage and educate individuals and communities about health-conscious diets. **Methods:** Microgreen cultivation is a cost-effective, low-footprint, recyclable, weather-independent, and transportable method to provide nutrition-underprivileged communities with exposure to healthy foods. A pilot microgreens outreach event established the feasibility of the outreach project. Next, we brought this program into local community centers and junior high afterschool programs. Medical students led the microgreen planting events and combined a fun planting exercise with in-depth conversations in small groups. These conversations explored what it means to obtain and eat healthy food. We assessed for potential complications from using microgreen cultivation as a teaching tool. Two local junior high schools and 1 adult education program elected to participate in our microgreen outreach events. Each participant attended a brief lecture, conversed with medical students while assembling their microgreens kits, and provided feedback on their experiences with healthy eating and accessing fresh food. **Results:** Junior high students displayed genuine curiosity when presented with the microgreen kits. Many students expressed an inability to access fresh foods and talked about how conventionally-prepared vegetables tasted bad. Food deserts were discussed, linking their existence with the food choices made by the students and their family members. Adult participants expressed difficulty in accessing fresh produce due to time constraints, reliable transportation, finances, and the distant location of full-service supermarkets. Medical students facilitated discussions that validated the concerns of the attendees. **Conclusions:** Microgreens outreach events offer a novel method to engage with underserved communities in a fun, easy, and low-cost manner. We aim to supply microgreens to local communities as an interactive educational tool to prevent obesity and educate participants about health-conscious eating.