Abstract

Objective. To evaluate the impact of an 18-month school obesity prevention intervention on the health behaviors of 4th and 5th grade students based on ecological principles and formative research conducted in Mexico. Materials and methods. A Randomized Control Trial (RCT) design was used to assign 27 schools to one of three conditions: basic or plus interventions and control. School environment measures, children’s eating and physical activity behaviors, and body mass index were assessed four times over a 2-year period in a sample of 830 students. Results. In the intervention schools, the availability of healthy foods increased with a concomitant decrease in unhealthy food availability. Food intake showed the same trend. In the intervention schools, children did not engage in more moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) in physical education (PE) class or recess but increased steps taken. Obesity prevalence did not change. Conclusion. The intervention improved the school food environment and child healthy behaviors.

Keywords

Obesity /prevention, nutrition, physical activity, evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions, child nutrition, Mexico.