Abstract

Objective. This intervention sought to promote healthy eating with the ultimate goal of reducing childhood obesity risk. Materials and methods. Three hundred and sixty-one Latino families living on the US-Mexico border with at least one child between 7-13 years of age were eligible to participate. Families randomly assigned to the four-month intervention received 14 contacts with a promotora (community health worker), consisting of 11 home visits and three telephone calls; the control condition was a delayed treatment intervention. Children reported on their dietary intake at baseline, immediately post-intervention and at the six month follow-up visit. Results. The intervention reduced weekly consumption of fast food (p<0.05). A dose-response relationship was observed such that for every seven hours of promotora contact, monthly variety of fruits (p<0.01) and vegetables (p<0.01) increased by one. No other intervention effects were observed. Conclusions. Family-based interventions can improve children’s eating habits, with the amount of contact with the promotora being key to success.

Keywords
Diet, Mexican Americans, child, intervention, community health workers.