Abstract

Objective. This paper describes the methods and key findings of formative research conducted to design a school-based program for obesity prevention. Materials and methods. Formative research was based on the ecological model and the principles of social marketing. A mixed method approach was used. Qualitative (direct observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and photo-voice) and quantitative (closed ended surveys, checklists, anthropometry) methods were employed. Results. Formative research key findings, including barriers by levels of the ecological model, were used for designing a program including environmental strategies to discourage the consumption of energy dense foods and sugar beverages. Conclusion. Formative research was fundamental to developing a context specific obesity prevention program in schools that seeks environment modification and behavior change.

Keywords

Interdisciplinary research, obesity, school feeding, environment, Mexico.