Abstract

Objective. Assisting Hispanic immigrants in making culturally acceptable food choices may affect their health for generations. As a relatively new enclave of Hispanics, Scout County, Mississippi, was chosen to study dietary acculturation and health concerns of immigrants. Material and Methods. The research method consisted of interviews with community representatives (N=11), a focus group (N=6), and interviews with Hispanic immigrants (N=18). Results. Community representatives mentioned availability influenced immigrants’ food choices and suggested promoting cultural awareness and offering nutrition classes on local ingredients. Food cost, health concepts, food selection, and eating habits of children were salient themes from the focus group and interviews with Hispanics. Hispanic participants mentioned long work hours affect food selection and that US produce lacks freshness and flavor. Conclusions. Results indicate that an intervention must be formulated that preserves healthful dietary practices and minimizes the negative health aspects of acculturation to the “American diet.”

Keywords
Diet, culture, transients and migrants, Hispanic Americans, Mississippi, United States.