

NRS372: Maternal Child & Family Health Nursing Practice

**Assignment 1 – Promoting Family Health, Health Promotion Activity**

## **Dietary habit of male adolescents**

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## **Introduction**

After World War II, Japan experienced a rapid economic growth and change in society.

Japanese eating habits are greatly influenced by western culture, and in these few decades, Japanese eating habits have become rich. This change has brought a problem for health. Public Relations Office (2008) announced that Japanese government has started a new health examination system from April 2008. The new system lets all Japanese citizens who over 40 years old have screening of a health risk which comes from accumulation of internal fat. The reason why the government starts the system is a large number of the people have got health problems such as obesity or diabetes. The statistics (Public Relations Office, 2008) also showed more men suffered from the health problems than women. Nowadays, health problems related to diet have become a one of the big issues in Japan, especially male population.

To protect people from having diseases which relate to unhealthy diet, it is necessary to encourage the people having healthy meals. However, changing dietary habits could be really difficult, especially for fixed life patterns of mature adult. Thus, to promote a health level in community, it might be important to help and educate people who are in an early stage of life about the healthy food choice. McMurray (2003, pp. 148, 149) mentioned that for adolescents, “lifestyle choices play a large part in determining how

they will negotiate the transition into healthy adulthood”. Hence, health promotion for adolescents could be essential to improve individual then community and the nation’s health. It might be important for nurses in community to focus on not only “sick” adults but also “healthy” adolescents to reduce future patients.

This report describes a health promotion activity which encourages male aged 13-15 taking healthier diet. Contents of this report include the current Japanese nutritional figures and the problem, health need barriers for the target group, reference of health promotion principles and an action for the health promotion project and evaluation of the project.

### **Statistics nutrition and health problems in Japan**

According to Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau (2009), there are some significant figures which relate to nutrients and diets. The daily intake of calories for one person in Japan decreased from 2,210kcal (1970) to 1,904 (2005). In contrast, the intake of fat increased 46.5g (1970) to 53.9g (2005). These figures indicate today's Japanese people tend to eat more fatty food compared to the days in 1970.

The main causes of death in Japan are mainly cancer, heart diseases and cerebrovascular diseases (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau, 2009).

They are associated with daily diet. Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2008)

published Japanese people who were suspected or potentially diabetic added up to

18.7million in 2006. This represented about 18% of people over the age 20 in Japan

(104million).

### **Health needs of the target group (13-15yrs) Japanese Adolescents**

Being overweight can be potential health problem. It increases the risk of diseases such

as type 2 diabetes and heart attack. Being overweight for early age will lead to

continuous overweight in adults (Murray, 2009, p. 452). So it is necessary to improve

eating behaviour at the early age. Also young people tend to be vulnerable to their

appearance. They care how other people think their appearance. If they don't have

confidence in their appearance they might not do things positively, for example,

enjoying sports or making relationships. Murray (2009, p. 452) describes that young

people who are obese possibly experience low self-esteem, negative body image,

depression, peer rejection and conflicts with parents, siblings and peers. To help

physical and mental development for people, keeping a healthy diet plays an important role. So they need to know what they should choose to eat.

### **Needs assessment for the age group**

According to The Synthetic Window of Governmental Statistics (2009), average height of 14 years adolescents in 1970 was 160.5cm (male) and 154.2cm (female). Average weight of the adolescents was 49.6kg (male) and 48.3kg (female). The figure in 2008, the average height was 165.4cm (male) and 156.6cm (female), and the average weight was 54.9kg (male) and 50.4kg (girls). As they were shown, average height and weight of Japanese adolescents improved during some decades. Looking into another statistics, it can be found other results of dietary changes in Japan. In 1977, percentage of 14 years adolescents who were overweight was 4.91%. But in 2008, the figure rose 9.29%, nearly twice as 32 years ago. Also, rates of adolescents who were overweight in other ages were 9.68% (13 years) and 11.54% (15 years). Moreover, the rates for male were higher than female. The percentages of the male were 10.28% (13 years), 9.99% (14 years) and 13.54% (15 years). Generally, it can say that more adolescent male are

overweight than the female. Therefore, this health promotion project focuses on a diet for the male.

### **Existing health promotion strategies in Japan**

In 2000, with increase attention for health promotion, Japanese government enacted a policy of Health Japan 21 (2000). This aims for promote Japanese health and set objective figures to cut down on diseases such as diabetes or stroke. In 2002, Japanese government published Health Promotion Law (Health Japan 21, 2003). This law focuses on health problem caused by intake of excessive nutrients. This law also obligates on the government to do survey for checking nutritional conditions of Japanese people and medical and co-medical workers to do health education. The government has enacted a food education program as well. This program determines to create a roll of food teachers and place them on school. The teachers' rolls are to educate pupils about diet and to administer school meals. According to the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, McMurray (2003, pp. 26-29) cited its five strategies; build healthy public policy, create supportive environments, strengthen community action, develop personal skills and reorient health services. Japanese government put a healthy public policy (Health

Promotion Law). The policy encourages creating supportive environment with health education by the health workers and the teachers. Then the education can help to develop person's skill to live healthily.

### **Discussion about barriers to promoting health for the target group**

If they already have particular eating habit, it is hard to change. If parents have unhealthy eating habit, their children have no choice but receive it.

McMurray (2003, p. 149) claims there are many advertisements for fast food, junk food or soft drinks, on the other hand, advertisements for fruits and vegetables are quite a few. Advertisements in television can have strong influence for people and they can be found anywhere. Adolescents are very likely to be influenced what they see. If they think eating junk food was "fashionable", they may not hesitate eat it even it is called "junk food". Furthermore, most industrialised countries (including Japan), fast food restaurants has been more popular (McMurray, 2003, p. 149). Fast food is generally cheaper than the other options, and adolescents generally don't have so much money. If they go out with friend, they may tend to choose a cheap fast food restaurant. Adolescents are often influenced by their friend of the same age (Murray, 2009, p. 455).

If their friends like junk food, they might be influenced and start to eat it. In 13-14 years old adolescents, generally they stay a long time with friends. Adolescents like to share what they do with friends. So there is a risk bad eating habit spread between young people.

### **How do PHC and HP principles relate to your project?**

Being overweight is not a disease, but actually increases a risk for health. If let the situation go, people potentially have disease probably increase. People who are overweight or having unhealthy diet are not patient, but they might be. So it's not a fundamental solution if nurses only care people who have disease from unhealthy diet. Nurses should care or help people before they get sick by the way of protecting and promoting their health. In this project, a health promotion plan was made for adolescents. Obviously this is not care for sick people but help to increase health level in young people to encourage them having healthy life. On PHC principles (McMurray, 2003, p. 36), they tell that it is important to fit the life patterns of community, meeting needs and demands and to let people participate to promote their health. So the project should have contents which involve the target group and let them take actions for their

health needs. Moreover, to promote health of the adolescents, the project should have sufficient accessibility for all of people in the target group, and introduce a health promoting way which they can do.

Aims of this project are to encourage the adolescents having better skills to control their health, give them information which could be supportive resource for their life.

Essentially, the project should be concerned about not only health information but also what the adolescents want to know. It is important involve the target group to care of their own health. Then the project can be effective.

### **Plan of action - how to promote health**

Increasing the youth number of being overweight is a problem of food choice. As showed above, the current ratio which shows Japanese people's intakes of calories and fat can be thought that it takes part in increasing the number of the national overweight population. Thus, it is important to encourage the young adolescents to choose healthy food. If they know healthy food choice, they may continue healthy diet in their life. This could result reducing the number of adolescents who are overweight and possibly decrease certain diseases which related to obesity in the future. It could be necessary to

educate the adolescents which food is recommendable and not recommendable for their food choice. To educate the youth widely should be particular methods. This time, A4 size information poster was made to help the adolescents to know healthy diet. The reason why the poster was made was that it could make some people to know the information at the same time. Posters can be seen if they are put up places where people often pass or gather. The poster for the health promotion project was for places such as school or shopping center where many adolescents gather frequently. Adolescents often regard their friendships as the most important thing rather than relationships between adults (Murray, 2009, p. 455). Adolescents are often influenced by their friends. So, if contents in the poster interest the young people, they may tell the information their friends. If they share right information about health, health of youth will be more secure. Murray (2009, p. 455) describes the peer group of adolescents could provide opportunities to learn behaviour related to later life stages. If the information develops personal skills to select better food for health, it could reinforce peer support of healthy choice. Therefore, promoting the adolescents' dietary habits, it needs give them interesting information about their diet.

### **Resources - designing a poster**

To design the poster, a computer and software (Microsoft Word 2007) was used. Clip arts in Word 2007, a copyright-free image from the internet and a photograph from a digital camera were used to illustrate the poster to attract the viewers and help them to understand its contents.

### **Description the process of designing**

People aged 14 – 25 are the age group which is the least likely to receive regular medical treatment in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2009). So they may tend to think they are healthy and do not need professional help. “Square” health education might be neglected. So, the poster should attract the young people and be read by them. Also, this information poster is for the young male, it might be important to consider masculine emotions. Men may be shame to show their weakness, because they might be reluctant to seek help (Rabin, 2009). So, the information should not contain things like professional support for young men who have problem, but it should contain things make a conversation about the topic between the young adolescents. It is hard to think that young people aged 13 – 15 have perfect knowledge of nutrition and are capable of understanding difficult terms of nutrition or a lot of

nutritional information at one time. A design of the poster should give them a message about healthy food choice and make them think at a short time. So, to emphasise visual image can help them to notice and understand the contents. Moreover, the young adolescents may not want to read difficult nutritional terms. Murray (2009, p. 456) described “slang is one of the trademarks of adolescence”. So, language on the poster can use slang to familiarize viewers of the target group with its contents. Visual design should also make them feel familiarity to involve them. Additionally, this poster should not suggest the adolescents to become underweight. The aim of the poster is for help them to choose healthy food.

Finally, the poster has been made (see appendix).

### **Evaluation of the poster**

A small investigation of the poster was conducted. Some correspondents for the investigation were randomly selected amongst residents in a CSU student accommodation. Then they were asked how they would felt about the health promotion poster if they were teenagers. Response from the correspondents was generally favourable the poster design (both design and expressions on the poster). On the other

hand, they advised if images such as iron men or sports men were used on the poster, it could be more impressive for the adolescent men. It might have been showed images of “strong” body. If so, the adolescents could have future vision of choosing healthy food. For more improvement, one of the correspondents told that some of the expressions on the poster could be replaced to other words. But the person added the words on the poster were still decent quality. Overall, the evaluation of the poster can be satisfactory. However, it is still possibility to improve a design of the poster.

### **Reflection on personal learning and further improvement**

Throughout the wiki postings, I learned necessity of research to promote certain groups. To improve people’s health is not an easy thing. What people need is really differ by their lifestyle and approaches to help to improve their health should meet their needs. Doing research is so helpful to determine what I should do for promoting the target group’s health. Before planning or doing actions, we should get information for target groups. This shouldn’t be forgotten, because every people and region is unique and there is no unified way to improve people’s help. Also, I realised multiple principles of health promotion and PHC. I still don’t think I fully understand the all principles. But I

know health comes not only to just nursing care in hospitals and hygienic improvements, but also empowering community and individuals (group and person).

## **Conclusion**

A lot of adults suffered from health problems relating eating habits. To reduce the problems, a health promotion activity for adolescents was planned and has been done as an early intervention for future crisis of health. Response from the correspondents was generally well. Thus, it could be expected the designed poster have some effect for the target group.

However, it must be told the activity has limitations. In the Ottawa Charter, Health promotion principles consist of five strategies (McMurray, 2003, p. 27). On the activity done this time did not include a political view and reorientation of health service. These could encourage creating a better environment for health; for example, advertisements of junk food could be banned by a political action. Furthermore, parents of the adolescents did not involved the health promotion plan. Murray (2009, p. 452) claimed nutrimental management should include the teens and their family.

For further actions for health promotion which encourage teenagers having better food choices, it could be important to include views of political, health service and parents of

the target group.

In conclusion, health problems relating to overweight follow changes of society. To solve the problems, nurses and health professionals should focus on to encourage lifestyle rather than conventional health care in hospitals.

Health promotion is an idea that encourages people having healthy life by multiple approaches. Actions of health promotion could reduce people who have illnesses. More adolescents in Japan who have risk for health are increasing today. Health research and health promotion plans should continuously make to prevent prevalence of the risk.

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## Appendix

A poster for health promotion

Aim: Encouraging better food choice

Target group: 13-15 Male