Potential Strategies for Healthy Lifestyle Messages of the SALSA Program to Reach Families: a Qualitative Study

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Table 1. Lifestyle behaviours of NSW High School students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lifestyle behaviour</th>
<th>2010 NSW SPANS¹ – Year 10 students %</th>
<th>2014 SALSA Year 10 Baseline data %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eating breakfast daily</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating 5 serves of vegetables daily</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating 2 serves of fruit daily</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet recommended level for physical activity (&gt; 60 minutes daily).</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet recommended recreational screen-time use (&lt; 2 hours daily).</td>
<td>34.9 (school day)</td>
<td>44 (school day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.4 (weekend day)</td>
<td>39 (weekend day)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ NSW Ministry of Health, 2010
Need for Prevention

- In 2004 MT Druitt GPs identified adolescent obesity as a key health issue.
- GPs reported that addressing obesity in young people is difficult.
- They identified a need to educate young people about healthy lifestyle.
- A peer-led approach in schools was considered the most viable option.
SALSA Program

SALSA = Students As LifeStyle Activists

- A unique peer educational program to motivate high school students to make healthier lifestyle choices
The SALSA Lessons

- **Lesson 1:** Healthy Choices
- **Lesson 2:** Movement Matters
- **Lesson 3:** Healthy Lifestyle
- **Lesson 4:** SALSA Actions

✓ Development of a SMART Goal and School Action Plan
Peer Leader outcomes:

- Gained knowledge, confidence and leadership skills
- Increased fruit and vegetable intake & amount of physical activity
Gains: Year 8 Students:

“What Year 8 students learnt and put into action”

- Eat fruit not junk food
- Drink water
- Eat well
- Be more active
- Watch less TV
Extending to Families

- To maintain behaviour change we need to engage families\(^1,2\)
- A systematic review showed that a more comprehensive approach, including interventions with family components, produces more effective results\(^3\)

\(^1\) White et al, 2008; \(^2\) Government Office for Science, 2007; \(^3\) Katz, 2009
Aim:
To develop effective strategies for extending the SALSA program to families.
We invited:
6 High schools that had received the SALSA program in 2013.

We consulted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2 x P&amp;C meetings</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 x Focus group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1 x PDHPE Faculty meeting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>6 x Yr 10 Peer Leader groups</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 x Yr 8 Class</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>2 x Interviews</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods

• Used pre-determined, semi-structured questionnaires for group discussions and interviews

• Questions tailored according to the group

• Responses were recorded and entered into MS Word
Data Analysis

• All data was qualitative
• 2 staff members independently reviewed the data
• Staff compared findings and developed and applied a coding structure with major themes and sub-themes
We explored:

1. The existing situation

2. Recommendations for reaching families
1.1 Influences on students’ health behaviour in Western Sydney

- Lifestyle habits of family and friends
- Cultural habits
- Crisis events
- Educational level of parents

- Weekly budget & price of food
- Time pressure

- Accessibility of healthy & unhealthy food
- Proximity of junk food outlets

- Stage of adolescence
- Motivation
- Food preference
1.2 What do students discuss with their families about school?

- Highlights and lowlights of the school day
- Limited SALSA messages are reaching families.
The Existing Situation

1.3 Communication channels between schools & families:

- School newsletter
- SMS service
- Social media
1.4 Sources of health information for parents:

- Television
- Magazines/Books
- Family members
- Facebook
- Google
2.1 Social Media:
- School website and Facebook page
- Youtube channel
- Instagram competition
- SALSA blog
- Use fun facts / shock statistics in posts

2.2 SALSA App:
- Recipes / Healthier alternatives/ Calorie counter/ Walking app

2.3 SALSA Ambassador:
- Sporting celebrities
2.4 SALSA events held at school:

- Forums
- Master chef-type competitions
- Healthy food making demonstrations
- Jump Rope for Heart or
- Walk Around the World

Challenges:

- Attendance
- Culturally appropriate
- Timing
2.5 Other suggestions:

- SALSA newsletter / text messages
- SALSA tasks with compulsorily sign-off by parents
- Community garden
- SALSA bandanas and wristbands
- SALSA recipe book (cultural)
Summary

• Consistent with the literature, we found that a range of factors influence students’ behaviour: personal, social, and environmental.

• Better use of existing channels such as social media, SMS services, newsletters to reach families.

• More innovative actions are needed to engage and inform families.
Findings to be implemented in 2014/15...
Acknowledgments

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- Rooty Hill High School
- Western Sydney Local Health District
- University of Sydney

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- Western Sydney Medicare Local
Facebook, Instagram & Website

facebook.com/SALSAProgram

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