

# Nutrition and Health among Juvenile Males

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# The Intersection of Kids, Nutrition & Media



# Background

- **Approximately 102,000 inmates in juvenile detention centers (Harrison & Beck, 2004)**
- **Residents primarily from low income communities (Mauer & Coyle, 2004)**
- **Low income children were less likely to know nutritional specifics such as serving recommendations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Food Pyramid" (Morton & Guthrie, 1998)**

# **Background (continued)**

- **Average youth watches three hours of television per day (Mares, 1998)**
- **Heavy viewing has been associated with poor nutritional knowledge and incorrect information about unhealthy foods (Signorelli & Lears, 1992)**
- **Television viewing has become a global risk factor for obesity (Cheng, 2005)**

# Program

- **“Turn Your Television Off” 15 –week intervention aimed at helping incarcerated youth learn about health and nutrition**
- **Goal: Increase participants knowledge of healthy foods, and to improve their ability to evaluate media messages**

# **METHODS**

- **Participants were recruited from two juvenile detention centers in Central New York State**
- **Participants were 98% White and 2% African American**
- **Mean age for the intervention and control group were 14 and 15 years respectively**

# Methods (continued)

- **Forty-one 50 minute sessions, facilitated by Ithaca College students at a New York juvenile detention facility**
- **Participants were given a pre-test, and after 15 weeks a post test**

# Methods (Continued)

- **2003 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System which consist of items nutrition, and obesity**
- **Evaluated on five-point scale**
- **Score of one equals no or little knowledge and inability to evaluate media messages**

# Results - Table 1

Perceptions of Media Accuracy and Nutritional Knowledge: Intervention and Control Groups of Juvenile Detainees  
(Mean Values)

Measure	Control (17)			Intervention (16)		
	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change
Media Accuracy	2.00	2.00	0.00	1.60	4.00	+2.40
Nutritional Knowledge	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	4.20	+2.20

Values ranged from 1 (little accuracy or knowledge) to 5 (comprehensive accuracy knowledge)

# Conclusion

- **Low-cost early intervention programs for juveniles have the potential to promote positive long-term eating habits and reduce obesity and poor diets**
- **This approach may also encourage juveniles to maintain their healthy eating upon release**

***Thank You***

