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## Impact of Nutrition Education in Improving the Quality of Meals among Low Income Families

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**Introduction:** Poverty, food and nutrition insecurity among low income families, have been considered long-term issues in the Philippines, most especially in both rural and urban poor communities. Nutrition programs and activities should consider the challenges of inadequate resources and economic status of families for its successful implementation and adoption.

**Objectives:** This study aims to investigate the effect of nutrition education in improving the quality of meals among low income families in selected communities.

**Methods:** The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a total of 70 households randomly allocated to control and experimental group. Weekly nutrition education that focuses on healthy and economical meal planning was given for a period of eight weeks for the experimental group while control group were given instructional material for general healthy living. Nutrition knowledge, dietary diversity and intakes of protein, iron and vitamin A were gathered and analyzed for differences between and within groups.

**Results:** Majority of the respondent considers the price and nutritional values as the two most important considerations in meal planning. There were no significant differences in nutrition knowledge, dietary diversity and intakes between the two groups at baseline. The experimental group had significantly higher protein ( $p=0.015$ ) and diversity score ( $p=0.004$ ) after the intervention. Additionally, the experimental group had significant increase in their nutrition knowledge ( $p=0.002$ ) after the eight-week nutrition education.

**Conclusion:** Findings of the study showed the possible impact of nutrition education in improving nutritional knowledge, dietary diversity and intake among low income families. Further, agencies and policy makers may look into institutionalizing the provision of nutrition education among low income families to help in addressing malnutrition.

**Keywords:** Low income families, diet diversity, nutrition knowledge, dietary intake