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## Journal of the National Medical Association

Volume 103, Issue 3, March 2011, Pages 269-277

### ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION

## Reach-Out: A Family-Based Diabetes Prevention Program for African American Youth

Deborah L. Bumet MD, MA<sup>1</sup>  ... Marshall H. Chin MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684\(15\)30290-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684(15)30290-X)

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### Abstract

#### Objective

: To pilot test and assess the feasibility of a culturally grounded approach to adolescent overweight and diabetes prevention.

**Study Design:** Reach-Out, a family-based nutrition and exercise program for overweight African American youth aged 9 to 12 years and their families, is led by lay health leaders and conducted in a community setting on Chicago's south side (Illinois). Age-appropriate interactive sessions focus on skills building, problem solving, and setting goals during 14 weekly sessions, with monthly meetings thereafter. Pre-post comparisons were made for 29 families (62 subjects) using physical (body mass index [BMI], blood pressure, waist circumference), biochemical (glucose, insulin, lipid levels) and behavioral data. Statistical analyses included mixed-effects linear models and logistic regression.

#### Results

Children's mean BMI z score fell from 2.46 at baseline to 2.38 at 14 weeks and 2.39 at 1 year ( $p = .02$ ), while parents' BMI remained stable. Children reported increased walking ( $p = 0.07$ ) and exhibited a corresponding rise in mean serum high-density lipoprotein cholesterol from 49.4 to 54.2 ( $p < .001$ ). Qualitative assessment showed that participants enjoyed the program but felt the program could be improved by making the sessions even more interactive.

#### Conclusion

: A community-based program for overweight minority youth and families can successfully address overweight, with the potential to decrease diabetes risk in youth.

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### Keywords

nutrition; exercise; intervention; obesity

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