

# Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Elementary School Children: a Comprehensive School

## Prevention Program

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**Objectives:** The aim of this study is to evaluate the effects of a comprehensive school prevention program utilized health promoting strategies in elementary schools, Taiwan. The effects of this program were expected to increase students' knowledge, attitude and behaviors about healthy dietary and physical activity.

**Methods:** A quasi-experimental design was used with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes from seven experiment schools and two control schools. Experimental group (n=465) received healthy eating and physical activity instruction with an intervention period of 7 weeks, while the control group (n=158) received no treatment during the same period. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect pre-and post- intervention data. Data were analyzed using Pearson's Chi-square, Paired t-test and ANCOVA statistics.

**Results:** The intervention group significantly increased their healthy dietary knowledge and attitude in posttest ( $p < 0.001$ ). There was also a significant main effect in physical activity for intervention group ( $p < 0.05$ ). The impact on healthy dietary behaviors was not significant in pre-post test.

**Conclusion:** The results support the fact that a comprehensive school prevention program can produce a positive increase in students' physical activity, healthy dietary knowledge and attitude. Long-term follow-up is needed to assess the impact on healthy dietary behaviors.

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