NEMS Milwaukee: Understanding a Latino Food Environment

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Welcome Beat Alumni!

- Built Environment Assessment Training
  June 2009, San Diego
Who are we?

CORE/El Centro: A Natural Healing Center

- Creating access
- Building community
- Inspiring the wholeness
What do we do?

- Natural healing therapies
  - Acupuncture
  - Reiki
  - Massage

- Holistic Exercise Classes
  - Yoga, Nia, Capoeira, Zumba, Qi Gong

Clients: 70% Latino, Average household income - $17,000/year
Services offered on Sliding Fee Scale
Projecto Salud:
- Leadership Development
- Community Engagement
- Coalition Building

Creating New Avenues for Social Change
Study Location
Adult Obesity

- USA (2008): 34%
- Wisconsin (2009): 28%
- SSCHC (2010): 39%
Understanding the Latino Food Environment

- Methods – NEMS-Stores
  - 13 Food Stores
    - 8 large – and medium-sized grocery stores
    - 5 small/limited selection grocery stores
  - Milwaukee’s Unique Environment – El Rey
Community Health Promoters

- Community Leaders & Co-Researchers
Understanding the Latino Food Environment

**NEMS-Stores Results**
- **Availability:** Range 11 to 28 (M=20.06, SD=5.76)
  - Significant difference by store size (F=9.53, p=.01)
- **Price:** Range -2 to 6 (M=-0.1, SD=2.45)
  - Juice and ground beef had greatest price difference, Ave difference
- **Quality:** Range 5 to 6 (M=5.6, SD=.49)
  - Overall good visual quality
  - Anecdotal knowledge that quality is not good post-purchase in some medium and small stores
• Only 6 (out of 13) stores offered baked chips

• Only 3 offered more than 2 varieties of low fat option
Availability was high in both types of stores

Prices were a little more expensive in Latino Stores

Quality seemed to be acceptable in most of the stores *
Many items were cheaper in Latino Stores compared with American stores, however quality and availability was sometimes lower.
Ground Meat: Lean vs. regular

Available in both but cheaper in Latino Stores

[Price Comparison Diagram]

- Price per pound
- Availability

- Latino
- American
Key Findings

- Good availability and competitive prices of fruits and vegetables in a predominantly Latino neighborhood (Milwaukee)

- Latino stores offered cheap produce but less availability and higher prices of several healthier items (whole wheat bread, milk, baked chips)

- Minimum availability of more American food (muffins, frozen dinners) in Latino stores

- Produce quality seemed to be high in most of the medium/large stores

- Small corner stores offered minimum availability of produce and healthy food items
Lessons learned

This study filled an important research gap in understanding the nutrition environment in some Latino-low income neighborhood.

Future Research should:

- Adapt NEMS-Stores to Latino diet/culture (cheese, tortillas, beans) but also healthier items, such as organic items and HFCS-free items.
- Conduct a NEMS-Restaurant in this area.
- Understand how individuals make choices in this specific environment.
Where are we now?

Sixteenth Street Community Health Center & Healthy Choices program

“Through family education and community advocacy, Healthy Choices strives to improve the home and neighborhood environment for adults and children in Milwaukee’s south side, so they can enjoy a healthier life”
Where are we now?

CORE/El Centro Community Engagement Project

Understanding root causes of obesity in community
Building power to address food environment issues
Part of the Community Regional Food Systems Project that strives to increase healthy food options in the neighborhood

- USDA funded, 5-year, 7-city project
- Goal: Create an enhanced food environment on Milwaukee’s South Side
  - South Side Food Coalition
  - Healthy Food Marketing campaign w/grocers