Little Earth Strong: A Community-Level, Culturally Appropriate Diabetes Prevention Pilot Targeting Urban American Indians

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This project has been approved by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board.

What Is the Purpose of This Study/Review?

• The purpose of this pilot study was to determine if a culturally appropriate diabetes intervention developed in partnership with an Indigenous urban community was feasible.
• To determine if community driven, culturally specific approach could potentially be effective in lowering diabetes risks.
• To determine if a community targeted diabetes intervention would be effective.

What Is the Problem?

• American Indians suffer from the highest diabetes type II disparities than any other group in the United States.
• Present diabetes interventions have been less effective than hoped.

What Are the Findings?

• A culturally specific and community level intervention was developed and found feasible.
• Biometric data indicated that a significant reduction in A1C values.
• Health intervention shows promise if grounded in culture, flexible, and situated within the community.
• Decolonization and community control are key to long-term sustainability and success.

Who Should Care Most?

• Healthcare providers.
• Diabetes educators.
• Community program leaders.
• Indigenous communities.
• Teachers.
• Urban housing project leaders.
Recommendations for Action

• Consult and collaborate with Indigenous, and other urban community leaders, to determine the most culturally appropriate and feasible health interventions.

• Communities must be in control of identifying their health concern and leading policy and establishing communal norms for healthy eating and exercise.

• Children may be most able to maintain healthy behaviors and engagement if the family suffers from high stress.

• Exercise and food perceptions are potentially more effective if culturally grounded and specific.

• Those who attend more frequently, tend to lower their diabetes risks more rapidly. Thus, offering a variety of culturally specific exercise and food options may be the best strategy.