



Feeding Healthy Food to Kids randomised control trial: three month analysis



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AIM: To determine whether provision of targeted, self-directed nutrition and parenting resources to parents in rural northern NSW, resulted in changes to their child feeding practices, or the dietary intake of their child. This report details the baseline characteristics of study participants and results from the 3 month follow up.

METHODS: Parents of children (n = 146) aged two to five years were recruited to the FHFK RCT from rural northern NSW. Children's dietary intake and child feeding practices were reported by parents at baseline and three months, using a validated food frequency questionnaire and Child Feeding Questionnaire respectively. Parents were randomised to either the intervention group or control via standardised methods. The intervention group were provided with self-directed nutrition and parenting resources, in addition to a generic control group resources.

ANCOVA tests were used to determine differences between the control and intervention groups for selected dietary intake and child feeding parameters from baseline to 3 month follow up, after adjustment for imbalances at baseline.

RESULTS: Baseline data was analysed for 146 children with a mean age of 4.0 ± 1.0 years (52% male, 48% female) Mean fruit consumption was 3.5 ± 2.0 serves (minimum requirement is 1 serve for a child aged four years), and 3.8 ± 1.6 vegetable serves, equal to the minimum requirement for a child aged four years. Baseline daily consumption of energy-dense nutrient poor foods was calculated as 4.3 serves, compared to recommended intake of zero to one serve daily for a four year old child.

Data analysis at 3 month follow up for 112 children revealed that fruit juice consumption was 15% lower in both the control and intervention groups, but no intervention effect. There were no significant intervention effects on consumption of vegetables, fruit or energy-dense nutrient poor foods from baseline to 3 month follow up between control and intervention groups.

Seventy six percent of parents allocated to the intervention group had used both the *Tummy Rumbles* and *Raising Children* resources. Resource acceptability and utilisation was high, with over 25% using each resource more than once and 32% using *Tummy Rumbles* for more than two hours.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite high CD and DVD utilisation and acceptability, provision of these resources to parents did not result in changes to child feeding practices or children's dietary intake during the initial 3 months of this study. The FHFK study provides detailed information about the dietary intake and child feeding practices of parents in rural NSW, and adds to the growing body of evidence about engagement parents in population level nutrition interventions.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Kerith Duncanson is an Accredited Practising Dietitian who works for HNE Health as a Community Nutritionist. Kerith is passionate about Childhood Nutrition and Aboriginal Health, and has conducted many and varied community based nutrition interventions in these settings.



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