

Keren Greenberg, MPH¹; Mayada Karjawally, MPH¹; Elisheva Leiter, PhD¹; Maha Nubani, RN, MPH, PhD¹; Milka Donchin, MD, MPH^{1,2}; Donna R. Zwas, MD, MPH¹
¹Linda Joy Pollin Cardiovascular Wellness Center for Women, Hadassah Medical Center; ²Braun School of Public Health

Background

- Optimal nutrition is affected by different abilities, skills and social determinants.
- Food Literacy (FL), is the capability to make healthy food choices in different contexts, settings and situations. It encompasses a range of competencies, including skills, capacity, and self-efficacy.
- This program seeks to improve nutrition behaviors in disadvantaged communities via a train-the-trainers program, providing lay leaders with the tools necessary to disseminate FL skills in their community.

Methods

- Community lay leaders underwent training in a manualized program that enabled them to effectively disseminate FL skills through engaging visual and game-based tools. Baseline and follow up data included participants' eating habits and FL level.
- The program included factors such as budgeting skills, recipe modification and cultural contexts.
- Food literacy was assessed by using questions based on an existing scale that has been modified for this program.

Results

- The program was piloted in a group of 15 lay leaders in Jerusalem. Lay leaders reported:
 - Higher levels of confidence in their ability implement the FL program in their community ($p < 0.001$)
 - Higher levels of confidence in their ability to find information about nutrition ($p < 0.05$)
 - Level of food literacy increased significantly ($p < 0.05$)
 - Positive correlation was found between FL levels and adherence to the Mediterranean diet ($p < 0.05$).
- The leaders have started facilitating FL groups, each in their own community

Conclusion

This preliminary data suggests that a FL train-the-trainers program can increase FL levels. This program has the potential to enable further transmission of information and skills, leading to improved eating habits within the community. The different FL dimensions are important to consider and address in any nutrition program.

