

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Health Communication And The Effects Of Okra Water Drinks

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Abstract: *This study is about health communication by drinking okra water and making it a healthy lifestyle practice. The main purpose of this study is to review what factors need to be taken into account in the description of health communication to make it a healthy lifestyle practice. The objective of this study is to see the relationship between some psycho-social factors and communication that play a role in bringing about changes in an individual's lifestyle, which involves physical activity and healthy eating. A research model based on the Health Belief Model was used. Indirectly, encouraging the use of vegetables such as Okra can help the community to obtain cheap sources of macro and micronutrients in addition to optimal health care.*

Keywords: Health communication, health issues, healthy lifestyle practices, okra water

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The role of health communication in determining an individual's health status is important. This is because the individual's health status is largely determined by the behavior of physical activity, nutrition and also the individual's lifestyle. Since most diseases are caused by human lifestyle practices, health communication has a great role to convey various information so that individuals can adopt a healthy lifestyle and subsequently have a good level of health [12].

Health communication plays a major role in promoting the importance of health care and community well-being. The existence of social media today clearly facilitates the process of health communication between senders and receivers of health messages. Senders of messages such as the government, scientists and health practitioners are seen to be very active in conveying information to the public through various social media platforms. This information is very important to increase the public's awareness and

knowledge about the seriousness of various diseases, especially high blood pressure/diabetes, and at the same time can open the eyes of those who are skeptical of this health care practice.

Okra water can be considered as a body-friendly substance and safe to drink since it is natural. In order to ensure the safety of this okra water, the risk level of a chemical component in it needs to be analyzed and a safe measure for consumption needs to be identified. This is very important because there is usually a connection with health drinks, its use for a long period of time or excessive consumption.

2.0 HEALTH COMMUNICATION

One of the key objectives of health communication is to influence individuals and communities. The goal is admirable since health communication aims to improve health outcomes by sharing health-related information. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define health communication as “the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health”. The word influence is also included in the Healthy People 2010 definition of health communication as “the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individual, institutional, and public audiences about important health issues”[18]. According to Wakefield, Loken, & Hornik [19], Health communication has an important role to help the process of transferring information from health authorities to the public. The importance of health communication is also supported by UNICEF [17], which states that a good health program will help to achieve public health goals.

There is interface between communication and health which is increasingly recognized as a necessary element for improving both personal and public health. Health communication is often used synonymously with health education which can contribute to all aspects of disease prevention and health promotion. The most obvious application of health communication has been in these areas of health promotion and disease prevention. There has been improvement of interpersonal and group interactions in hospitals and other clinical situations such as between provider and patient, provider and provider and among members of a healthcare team, through the training of health professionals and patients in effective communication skills. Thus, health messages through public education campaigns can help in changing

the social climate in order to encourage healthy behaviors, create awareness, change attitudes, and motivate individuals to adopt recommended behaviors.

In the United States, a health education campaign on high blood pressure has been found to have successfully reduced stroke rates by 60 percent among people with high blood [2]. The more levels a communication program can influence, the greater the likelihood of creating and sustaining the desired change. Health communication alone, however, cannot change systemic problems related to health, such as poverty, environmental degradation, or lack of access to health care, but comprehensive health communication programs should include a systematic exploration of all the factors that contribute to health and the strategies that could be used to influence these factors. Well-designed health communication activities can help individuals better understand their own and their communities' needs so that they can take appropriate actions to maximize health.

3.0 HEALTH ADVANTAGES OF OKRA

Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) is one of the most widely known and utilized species of the family Malvaceae [7]. Okra is known by many local names in different parts of the world. It is called lady's finger in England, gumbo in the United States of America, guino-gombo in Spanish, guibeiro in Portuguese and bhindi in India [8][15]. Okra mucilage has medicinal applications when used as a plasma replacement or blood volume expander. The mucilage of okra binds cholesterol and bile acid carrying toxins dumped into it by the liver. The immature pods are also used in making pickle. The entire plant is edible and is used to have several foods [5][6].

Okra is used to control the body's cholesterol level. There are numerous significant illnesses related to high cholesterol level of the entire body. Managing the body's cholesterol level is nearly difficult because it's hard to avoid foods loaded with cholesterol content. One of the better health advantages of consuming okra is definitely the powerful management of the human body's high cholesterol level. This healthy vegetable is beneficial in slimming down and also decreasing cholesterol therefore keeps a healthy and also low cholesterol body. Okra have been taken advantage by diet advisors due to these qualities [20].

The nutrients in this okra drink are an important element to personal health. Healthy and balanced drinking habits can give birth to individuals with high potential in living a good normal life. Drinking okra water is a very appropriate context in educating and encouraging the community to practice it in addition to consuming food and drinks, especially from other fruits and vegetables.

Okra contain high fiber, which “helps to stabilize blood sugar by regulating the rate at which sugar is absorbed from the intestinal tract”. Because of fiber along with other nutrition, okra shows useful for minimizing blood sugar levels within the body, assisting along with diabetes. The fiber likewise helps support blood sugar levels level simply by slowing down sugar assimilation through the intestines [9].The frequent usage of okra might help avoid kidney disease. Within the research, “those who consumed okra every day decreased clinical indications of kidney damage a lot more than the ones that simply consumed a diabetic diet.” This ties along with diabetes, as almost 50% of kidney disease cases are generated by diabetes [4]. The use of natural plants to treat diseases is becoming increasingly popular. Okra water is a complementary and alternative treatment method that is scientifically proven to be effective. This okra water is considered as an additional drink when it is legal, it is still considered safe unless proven otherwise. Okra water is prepared according to the formulation techniques of previous community experiences and set according to the principles of nature.

This okra vegetable is believed to be able to cure various types of diseases. Scientific name of okra: *Abelmoschus esculentus*, *Hibiscus esculentus* (L.)

There are some of the advantages for health include [11]:

- Reduce cholesterol.
- Reduce uric acid.
- Reduce hypertension.
- Reduce weight.
- Stabilizes blood sugar levels.
- Speed up digestion especially in the large intestine.

- Prevent and treat constipation or difficulty defecating.
- Neutralizes stomach acid and treats ulcers.
- Prevents and reduces seizures.
- Relieves inflammatory diseases in the lungs.
- Cure sore throat.
- Treats hemorrhoids.
- Treating Kidney Pain.
- Treats diabetes.

The method of preparation is:

- 1) Take several okra beans.
- 2) Cut both ends.
- 3) Slice the center & cut about ½ inch of it.
- 4) Soak in a glass of hot/cold water (cover the glass).
- 5) After the mucus comes out, take out the filtered okra beans and drink the water.

For this okra water, evidence of effectiveness may be based on traditional use, testimonials, clinical studies, controlled and uncontrolled use, and even randomization. However, there is still a lack of systematic clinical studies to support these okra water claims. The safety issue of some herbal ingredients has recently been called into question, partly due to adverse events associated with their use and, also, related clinical interaction trials between herbal medicines and prescription drugs.

Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench) is a medicinal plant of immense importance with large pharmacological applications. Besides having the above-mentioned nutritional and medical, industrial properties, it has been used as an ingredient of many herbal formulations, which are used for the cure of various ailments, in particular the regulation of blood pressure, fat, diabetes, chronic dysentery genitourinary disorders, simple goiter and ulcer [1].

The method of drinking okra water that comes from the surrounding nature as a practice of healthy living. This is not something new but has been popular for centuries by various societies. This is a medical therapy that has been recognized and has its own strengths. This is because drinking okra water that is based on nature is easy to find and quite easy to practice. The elders of the past have conducted experiment after experiment, in treating various types of diseases suffered by patients. The practice of drinking okra has been handed down from generation to generation orally and has proven to be effective especially for diabetes and high blood pressure.

4.0 HIERARCHICAL EFFECTS AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Ray [10] in his study on hierarchical effects states that the effects of communication do not necessarily follow a sequence that assumes that knowledge triggered by communication information will bring affective changes and subsequently will change behavior. Such a sequence will only happen if the individual has a high level of involvement with a product or the information he receives. If the opposite situation occurs, i.e. in the context of low involvement, then it is possible that behavioral changes can occur first without the influence of knowledge and affectivity. According to Johnson [3], involvement needs to meet personal needs, interest and interest in an issue or topic and see how much an individual want or has the will to think about the topic.

Shakerinejad [14] reported on his research on the effect of calcium nutrition education on changing knowledge, attitudes and practices. The Health Belief Model has been used as a theoretical framework as a predictor of change. The intervention was carried out on 188 respondents which are 95 cases and 93 controls consisting of high school and junior high school girls in the age group of 14-18 years who were randomly selected from two schools in Ahvaz, Iran. Respondents who became the case participated in eight half-hour nutrition education sessions for a period of three months through lectures and discussions based on the Health Belief Model. The results of the study show that there is an improvement in terms of knowledge and attitude for the case group compared to the control after the health education intervention.

The results of this study show that the variables of knowledge and attitude influence calcium nutrition practices among students dramatically.

Accordingly, health communication needs to focus on the strategy of targeting the audience in a campaign plan rather than looking at the effectiveness of messages and channels. This audience-centering strategy needs to take into account several issues such as information needs, information usage and how the information affects the audience. Although the audience faces the same health problem but the information needs may be different. The use of information depends a lot on the health information needs faced by the community to approach the issue of the impact of health communication itself.

5.0 OKRA AND HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

From psychology perspectives, by promoting the nutrition of easily found vegetables such as "Okra" which provides a cheap source of macronutrients as well as micronutrients and mineral elements that can improve the economic status of poor farmers. This okra can also be used as an added value to cover malnutrition, among urban communities. The use of the vegetable "Okra" for various poor and rich communities is the most effective diet.

As food, okra can be eaten fresh or cooked and used as an additive in soups, salads, and stews. Okra has a high moisture content, it is rich in nutrients, and it is a great source of vitamins and minerals. Carbohydrates are present in okra mainly in the form of mucilage [21], commonly applied in different industrial segments and for medicinal purposes [22].

Psychological factors are important in explaining the causes of obesity as well as need to be paid attention to in making psychological assessments and interventions [23]. Psychological factors consist of the relationship between the mind and the brain (especially related to eating and food choices), cognitive factors (self-regulation, motivation and self-efficacy), perception of prejudice and discrimination and the prevalence of psychiatric symptoms (depression and anxiety) [24]. Individuals with psychological disorders such as depression may face difficulties in controlling food intake, less physical activity and

difficult to maintain a balanced body weight. Psychological factors have been identified as contributors to overweight, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Healthy Eating Behavior

A balanced diet is the intake of enough food for the needs of the body [25]. Humans need food and vitamins for growth and maintaining health. A balanced diet should have all the nutrients the body needs to function normally. Good nutrition begins to affect the health of the body since we are children. This helps strengthen the body's immune system in the present and future and strengthens the body's natural resistance system. We will become unhealthy if we have unhealthy eating habits. If we practice healthy eating habits and follow the recommendations of nutrition experts, we will be healthier [26].

This is a challenge for the community now to choose and determine the right amount of food to practice a balanced diet for a healthier life followed by active lifestyle practices. A balanced diet should include a variety of food groups in appropriate amounts for the needs of various important body functions. The practice of eating healthy food should be nurtured at home and in the early stages of childhood so that it becomes a lifelong habit. This is important as an incentive for them to live a balanced life and through this effort it gives the young generation the opportunity to gain early exposure to healthy lifestyle practices as well as imparting knowledge on choosing a balanced diet.

5.1 Perception and Cognitive

Perception is the context of social life, so it is known as social perception. Social perception is a process that occurs in a person that aims to know, interpret, and judging perceived others, both regarding their nature, its quality, or other conditions that exist in the person who is perceived so that an image of the other person as the object is formed [28]. Perception is the first stage of the thinking process. The second level is logic. Perception affects what logic sees. In short perception determines logic [29]. Perception is a process that occurs within the individual that begins with the reception of stimuli, until the stimulus is realized and understood by individuals so that individuals can know themselves and their surroundings

[30]. Perception is a 'copy and paste' element in every situation. Every time we see a new stimulus, it will be recorded and then filmed. When we receive a new stimulus, then the movie will play, where there is a new/old input coordination process on any slot and 'scene' that is relevant to the old one. New information that has been recorded and will try to match the old one. If there is no direct connection, then a new film will be shot. That's how it goes on, the process continues until the end of life.

Cognitive theory is based on the thought process, which is the internal mental process that allows humans to acquire knowledge, detect, store, achieve and recalling stored knowledge for reuse [31]. Cognitive learning theory involves mental processes that have an impact on human behavior. A process takes place in the brain to enable a person to master thinking skills. The process focuses on phenomena such as readiness, perception, motor control, attention, memory, learning and reasoning. This cognitive process involves an intellectual process that involves language mastery and learning a certain knowledge [32]. This shows that cognitive theory emphasizes the process of problem solving, common sense and is interested in knowledge, meaning, intention, feeling, creativity, expectation and thinking.

[27] There are three family feeding styles based on Baumrind's classic taxonomy of family styles, which are authoritarian, permissive and authoritative. This proves that family members have eating practices from the aspect of family eating style. Authoritarian family style is strict in controlling the diet of family members to eat favorite foods such as desserts, which are sweets and forcing family members to eat vegetable food. This is more of a pattern of control in the type of food intake without considering family members' preferences. Authoritarian family style proves that the respondents agree that there is no fast food in the kitchen or the home refrigerator. The family have the power to prohibit family members from consuming unhealthy foods. This the eating style shown by the head of the family is able to change the formation of the attitude of family members towards appreciating food. Authoritative family style, on the other hand, practices a balanced eating pattern that encourages family members to eat nutritious food. This provides an opportunity to make a selection of food types as well as to cooperate with each other through

the serving of food where the adult menu is acceptable, it turns out that family members are free to determine the portion (amount of food) of the food they like based on the food menu provided.

As a result of the perceptual and cognitive effect of thinking that has high family nutrition practices, the learning activities that are passed throughout life benefit and influence the family model. The practice of eating healthily is an important factor towards the health of the family, and has been formed starting at home. Therefore, a family should make every activity related to healthy eating such as menu planning, purchasing, selecting and preparing food as a mandatory activity for the family.

6.0 USE OF THE HEALTH BELIEF MODEL

Disseminating information that can reduce health risks and improve the effectiveness of health care is one of the most important goals in the field of health communication. The fact is, conveying information specially to influence behavior is often something complex due to the existence of differences in contexts and cultural systems [16].

A health communication campaign regarding pandemic influenza vaccine uptake for adults and children aged 10 years and over, in Australia. A survey was conducted of residents in Sydney, Australia to ascertain their risk perception, attitudes towards the epidemic and willingness to receive the influenza vaccine during the 2009 (H1N1) pandemic. Acceptance of these vaccines is influenced by perceived risk including risk of infection, risk of death or severe illness and risk of serious vaccine side effects. Public communication campaign predictor factors such as risk perception and attitude have successfully influenced the majority of the population to accept the vaccine [13].

The global health boom sees the world at large benefit greatly from modern medical methods and technology, but the actual impact is not as expected. Understanding the dynamics of society, solutions to various issues should be viewed from various angles. On the other hand, this simple practice and cultural sensitivity approach has a fertile ground for developing a theory of health communication practice that

aims to meet the cultural needs of the community. This study aims to present a health communication model based on healthy life practices.

6.1 Suggestively and Physiological Advantages

Okra seed is rich in protein and un-saturated fatty acids such as linoleic acid [33]. In some countries, okra also is used in folk medicine as anti-ulcerogenic, gastroprotective, diuretic agents [34]. However, little information on antioxidant capabilities of major phenolic compounds from okra seed is available. Okra is also a popular health food due to its high fiber, vitamin C, and folate content. Okra is also a good source of calcium and potassium. Okra pod contains thick slimy polysaccharides, which are used to thicken soups and stews, as an egg white substitute, and as a fat substitute in chocolate bar cookies and in chocolate frozen dairy dessert [35].

A balanced diet together with Okra can provide daily energy, provide essential nutrients for maintaining the body's physiology, avoid disease and improve immunity. Okra is a food source, which has an increase in terms of substance composition, nutrition, more than normal content and is able to have a positive impact on one or more body systems, further improving individual health. Okra works in its natural form, i.e. in conventional food properties, in addition to being modified and synthesized.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This study is an observation study and literature reading and is only limited to the researcher's personal practice. However, the results of the study obtained are able to provide a recommendation that can be used as a guide to the implementation of more effective health practices and efforts towards creating a healthy society can be implemented. Based on the findings of the study, it was found that conceptual knowledge is an important element in forming community trust. This basic element is existed since they were introduced to health problems. The study also shows that if an individual's conceptual knowledge is at a good level, then the belief in healthy practices will also be at a good level. Therefore, it can be concluded that a high effort to improve the conceptual knowledge of health communication needs to be done to

increase their trust for the better. Trust is one of the important elements to form this health communication as a society that lives a healthy life.

It can be concluded that drinking okra water can be used as an important part of life. This is because it proves that the practice since ancient times has a high level of thinking in studying the advantages and benefits of certain ingredients found in flora. This is clear that plantain is indeed important in medicine. Awareness from all walks of life to appreciate the natural resources that provide various types of plants. With the similar studies, many diseases can be cured by using natural ingredients.

Human being and nature are inseparable. The flora and fauna that are part of God's creatures in this world are complementary to human life, the relationship between these two divine creatures is symbiotic and complement each other. Plants are rich in water, carbohydrates, protein, fat, fiber, minerals and vitamins. Consuming these natural sources in the daily menu can continuously enrich nutrition for the benefit of mental and physical health. Many scientific studies have found that plants contain beneficial chemicals to treat various types of diseases that can affect health. Therefore, the knowledge about this okra water drink as an herbal medicine should be known. Although modern medicine is indeed the main focus for every disease, but nutrients and the advantages of traditional medical treatment either from the point of view of practice, or the use of herbs should also not be marginalized.

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