

Research and Planning- Cholesterol for Women's Heart Health

Emma Hawes

Purdue University

Prevalence of heart disease in women

American Heart Association | American Stroke Association's outreach includes Go Red For Women. Through research, fundraising, and education, AHA improves the life quality and the life expectancy of those with heart disease, which is the number one cause of death for women and the result of one in three deaths (American Heart Association, 2017). Heart disease's source cholesterol comes from your food and body.

High cholesterol presents no symptoms. There are two types of cholesterol, LDL, which is the main source of buildup in the arteries, and HDL, which helps remove bad cholesterol. The female sex hormone estrogen puts women at risk by raising HDL. During menopause, estrogen decreases along with HDL (CDC, 2013). Bad cholesterol levels can cause atherosclerosis, which is the thickening of plaque that breaks off and results in a blood clot. Women are not affected until their 50s or 60s, but most damage to arteries occurs in their 20s (CDC, 2013).

Strategy

The importance of cholesterol should begin at a young age due to most of the damage occurring at a young age. The target audience includes female children, teenagers, and college students in Tennessee. U.S. News and World Report ranked Vanderbilt Heart and Vascular Institute number 1 for heart care in Tennessee (Vanderbilt Health, 2017). Roughly 40% of adults who visited a doctor in Tennessee reportedly had high cholesterol (United Health Foundation, 2015). In 2016 for Tennessee, physical inactivity affected 26.8% of adults and compared to the national and state average Hispanics check their cholesterol the least (United Health Foundation, 2016). Reaching out to teenagers and children is critical because this will allow youth to change behaviors in exercise and healthy eating (CDC, 2013). Unsupervised eating habits put college students at risk (de Vos, et. al, 2015).

During February, which is National Heart Month, Go Red For Women hosts a fashion show with celebrities. Go Red For Women can reach out to young women during September, which is National Cholesterol Education Month (Centers for Disease Control, 2017). The Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis branches of the AHA will host events to raise awareness about how to control your cholesterol. Having an event in September will help gain momentum in fundraising and engagement with the AHA until National Heart Month.

Go Red For Women's "Know Your Numbers" Campaign educates women about cholesterol. An additional website will be made to communicate to teenage girls. For children, an app will be made for a game similar to the CDC's Rocket Blades for the HEADS UP campaign (CDC, 2017). To prevent teenagers and college students from being sedentary, Fitbit could partner with AHA's partners, Macy's or CVS Health, where the girls could obtain a gift card based on the number of steps they take.

AHA has the largest volunteers of any organization (AHA, 2017). To bridge the gap of health disparities, AHA will provide volunteers who speak English and Spanish. Volunteers for the AHA will set up booths at Macy's and CVS Health Stores to ask the youth if they want a free sticker or lip balm if funds are contingent. A pamphlet will be presented during the conversation. After the conversation with people, a volunteer will explain the efforts of the AHA through research and outreach to encourage the girls' parents to make a donation.

Due to the prevalence of most damage occurring between ages 20-30, volunteers will set up booths on college campuses in August to educate students about the upcoming Go Red Race in Nashville. The Go Red Race will be held as an event to raise awareness similar to the fashion show. The race will allow all genders and ages to gather to raise money for women's health and create a conversation about the importance of knowing how to manage your cholesterol.

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