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Valencia Browning-Keen

Sam Houston State University, USA

Is diabetes inevitable if overweight and obesity can be controlled through an environment of positive healthy options?

Nearly 21 million American adults have been diagnosed with and suffer complications from diabetes and more than 33% of Americans have been diagnosed with prediabetes. Overweight and obesity is typically linked to specific levels of hormones and inflammation. Besides looking at the environmental contributors to unhealthy and unmindful lifestyles, researchers are also looking at the potential link between the microbes in our gut and the causes of diabetes. Besides the genetic predisposition and mindless lifestyle choices, microbes in the gut appear to be connected with the development of Type 2 diabetes. Certain microbes form toxins that enter the gut and cause inflammation in the body which leads to impacts on fat cells and the liver. Diet of an individual appears to be the single most important factor influencing the gut microbiota. Researchers are beginning to ask, what is going on in our communities and what are communities doing about it? Investigating disease initiation is a goal of many researchers. Because of the Freshman 15 typically gained by students who enroll and leave home for the first time, SHSU has chosen to participate in investigating how we can help reduce this trend in our students by providing healthier options. The FRUVED™ Community based Participatory Research Model and multi partner university program (90 university partners) strives to identify and look at ways to sustain outcomes of a healthy weight by investigating 6 areas of potential issues which lead to unhealthy habits and create an environment change based on university audits and surveys of students and administrators as to how healthy they believe their options are at university campuses. The Research model includes 6 prongs which include: diet, physical activity, stress management, sleep habits, peer relationships and academic success. Data from Sam Houston State University will be provided during the conference and the interventions chosen to help reduce disease initiation and promote healthy options so that chronic diseases like diabetes do not have to be inevitable.

Biography

Keen has been with Sam Houston State University since 2009. In addition to being a clinician and educator, she has been a part of various non-profit organizations that are spiritual and related to medical nutrition therapy in nature. She is the founder of The Ronald Wayne Keen Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit 501c3 in honor of her late husband, for minor's relief. Her research efforts have been varied, mainly focusing on systematic changes in the health care system for access to services for the elderly, childhood obesity, postpartum and nutrition education. She enjoys study abroad classes and working with undergraduates as well as graduate students in the Food Science and Nutrition programs. In her spare time, Dr. Keen enjoys spending time with family, playing musical instruments, singing, writing poetry, enjoying her animals, gardening and cooking for family and friends. Her parents and grandparents were wonderful, hospitable spirits who enjoyed music, great food and laughter!

vbk001@shsu.edu

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