

Promotion of the health profile of children and teenagers in shelters and correctional institutions in Taiwan

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White paper of health inequality indicates that all citizens have the same right in improving the knowledge in health literacy. Children and teenagers living in shelters and correctional institutions are those who receive less care and education from the elder. They tend to have poor health literacy and behaviors than their counterpart peers. In this study, we investigated the current health literacy of children and teenagers living in shelters/correctional institutions, followed by an intervention to improve their knowledge of health. A total of 275 students were collected from the northern, middle and eastern parts of Taiwan. Another 141 staffs from shelters/correctional institutions were also recruited to understand their health knowledge and behaviors. Expert-proven validity and reliability questionnaire was used. Data were presented as medians and analyzed with Wilcoxon sign rank test due to non-normal distribution by using SPSS software. Results showed that 8.8% of 10 to 14-year-old subjects were underweight and 24.6% were overweight or obese while 13% of 15 to 17-year-old subjects were underweight and 40% were overweight or obese. In health literacy knowledge, the percentage of having correct answers were 57.6% for subjects of 10-14-year old, 56.4% for the subjects of 15-17-year-old and 69.4% for those staff working in the shelters. After intervention, the rate of having correct answers increased to 64.0% for the subjects of 10 to 14-year-old, 61.6% for the subjects of 15-17-year-old and 83.5% for those who work in those shelters. Their health attitude scores also increased from 3 to 4 points after the intervention. In conclusion, the health educational intervention is positive and effective for those children and teenagers living in shelters and correctional institutions as well as the staff working there.

Biography

Hsin-Nung Kao is a Senior Dietitian serving at the Taipei City Medical Center. He is also pursuing his PhD in Taipei Medical University.

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