Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Public Health
of
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BA (University of Victoria, 2015)

“Exploring Healthy Vending Contracts as a Localized Policy Approach to Improve the Nutrition Environment in Publicly Funded Recreation Facilities”

School of Public Health and Social Policy

Wednesday, March 28th, 2018
10:00 a.m.
Human and Social Development Building
Room B202

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Catherine Worthington, School of Public Health and Social Policy, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Patti-Jean Naylor, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Michael Hayes, School of Public Health and Social Policy, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Prof. Afzal Suleman, Department of Mechanical Engineering, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Objective: Many Canadian publicly funded recreation facilities have an obesogenic environment. Researchers recommend food and beverage policies to change these environments, however further research is needed to distinguish effective policy approaches. A promising, localized policy approach not yet well evidenced is the use of vending machine contracts with health stipulations to improve nutrition environments. The primary objective of this study was to determine whether a sample of Canadian publicly funded recreation facilities with healthy vending contracts had healthier vending machine nutrition profiles than those facilities with conventional contracts. A secondary research objective was to explore the additional influence of policy quality on the health profile of vending machines. Methods: This quantitative study used results from the baseline assessment done of the broader Eat, Play, Live (EPL) initiative. Vending machine audits and questionnaires were completed in participating publicly funded recreation facilities with vending machines (N=46). Vending product profiles were assessed using the Brand Name Food List which categorizes packaged foods according to the BC Guidelines for Vending in Public Buildings. Mann-Whitney U tests were used to determine if there were significant differences in the health profile of vending products between facilities with healthy vending contracts and those without. Results: Facilities with healthy vending contracts had significantly healthier vending product profiles compared to facilities with conventional contracts. On average, significantly less availability (on average) of unhealthy (DNS) products represented these healthier profiles. Vending profiles did not significantly differ based on higher quality contract health stipulations although sample size limited conclusions about this. Conclusion: Facilities with health stipulated in their contract differed from those without health stipulations. This suggests that healthy vending contracts (even with relatively generic stipulations) may be supportive of improved nutrition environments.