GUIDING STARS AT THE UNH DAIRY BAR

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Developed in 2006, "Guiding Stars"® (GS) is a point of selection rating system that uses the nutrient density of foods to categorize items as good (1 star), better (2 stars) or best (3 stars). In 2010 UNH Dining introduced the GS rating system to all three dining halls. The goal of this project is to determine if implementing GS at the UNH Dairy Bar (DB) influences patrons' choice of healthy foods. To meet this goal, a 5-item, anonymous survey of DB patrons was conducted during November 2012 (n=196, 73 female). This baseline survey revealed that 68% of DB participants felt that health and nutrition knowledge dictated their food choices all or most of the time and 79% thought healthy food choices were easily identified at the DB. The majority of participants cited that hunger, convenience, and taste influenced their food choices. Sixty percent of patrons reported no prior nutrition education; these patrons were less likely to cite the flowing factors influencing their food selection: nutrient content, posted nutrition information, organic, or locally produced/grown. The project's next steps will be to implement GS at the DB (March 2013) by placing GS icons near nutrient dense foods and menu items and develop signage and marketing items to promote GS at the DB. A follow-up survey (April 2013) will evaluate if the presence of GS at the DB influences patrons' food selections.

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