

## PROGRAM REVIEW FOR CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

### 1. Cover Sheet

**Center/Institute:** Center for Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles and Obesity Prevention

**Director/Administrator:** Maria Koleilat (Director), Associate Professor, Department of Public Health  
Pimbucha Rusmevichientong (Co-Director), Associate Professor, Department of Public Health

**College/Academic unit:** College of Health and Human Development

**Contact Information:** Maria Koleilat ([mkoleilat@Fullerton.edu](mailto:mkoleilat@Fullerton.edu); KHS 140)  
Pimbucha Rusmevichientong ([prusmevichientong@fullerton.edu](mailto:prusmevichientong@fullerton.edu); KHS 135)

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**Name of primary authors if different  
From Director/Administrator:** N/A

### 2. Mission and Goal

The Center for Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles and Obesity Prevention is fundamentally concerned with the rise in obesity in children. The center, therefore, works with schools and other community agencies to develop and test model health promotion programs and interventions. Additionally, the center assesses and evaluates existing programs and policies to identify theoretical models and environments that can explain and influence behavior patterns across different high-risk groups. Essentially, the center reflects the needs of the community by providing education and outreach to children and their families regarding healthy lifestyles and the prevention of obesity. The self-study successfully links the mission of the center to University mission and goals as well as to the college's mission and goals.

### 3. Activities

Since the last review in 2016, the center has identified several goals fulfilled with various related activities. Working under the provisions of grants from the state funds, the center has implemented multiple projects, including:

1) **Hosting MPH internship:** In the past three years, the Center has hosted a total of four MPH students (Ms. Erin Frost, Mr. Abel Alvizo, Ms. Betty Vu, Ms. Thalia Ramirez). These students were trained by the director and co-director to initiate the Center's website content with evidence-based articles and reports, collaborate with the Center's partners (i.e., faculty, and community), coordinate meetings with the Center director and co-director, and envision the Center's activities and contents such as short videos, workshops etc. Their training was multifaceted, designed to immerse them in the practical aspects of public health communication and partnership building. These interns played an essential role in facilitating collaboration between the Center and its diverse network of partners, which includes faculty members and community organizations.

2) **Revamping the Center's website** : Under the meticulous supervision and guidance of the director and co-director, our dedicated student MPH interns, Ms. Erin Frost and Mr. Abel Alvizo, embarked on a comprehensive revamp of the Center's website (<http://healthylifestyles.fullerton.edu>). This process involved a redesign of the website's layout, ensuring that the Center's content and resources were not only revised but thoroughly updated to reflect our current initiatives. Their work extended beyond aesthetic enhancements; it encompassed in-depth research aimed at providing evidence-based relevant contents and identifying faculty and student opportunities with on-campus entities and community partners. Furthermore, Mr. Alvizo took the initiative to compile a detailed Website Instruction Manual. This document is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide for subsequent student interns, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and tools to continue the essential work of editing and updating the website. This manual will ensure the continuity of our digital presence.

3) **Collaborating with the TAPP Center (Transfer Adult Re-entry Parenting & Pregnant Student)**: Under the close supervision of the director and co-director, MPH students -Breanna Cadiente and Pabodha Ratnayake- are leading a needs assessment project focusing on pregnant college students. This project, a collaborative effort with the Transfer Adult Re-Entry Parenting & Pregnant Student (TAPP) program at California State University Fullerton (CSUF), aims to gather essential data on the unique needs of this demographic, with a particular emphasis on those with intended pregnancies. By conducting focus group discussions with pregnant students at CSUF, this initiative seeks to delve deeply into understanding their specific needs and challenges during pregnancy. The aim is to construct a detailed database that not only highlights their particular needs but also identifies any institutional barriers or gaps in support they encounter during their pregnancy journey.

The ultimate goal of this needs assessment is to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for pregnant students. By understanding their specific needs and the obstacles they face, the project endeavors to advocate for policy changes or enhancements in campus resources and support systems. This initiative represents a stepping stone towards recognizing and addressing the specific challenges pregnant college students face, thereby fostering a more accommodating and responsive educational setting.

This pioneering initiative, funded by a 2024 Research Support Programs (RSP) grant from the College of Health and Human Development (HHD), has been granted full Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Scheduled to commence in March 2024, this project represents a significant milestone in our commitment to fostering an inclusive academic environment that actively addresses the needs of pregnant college students.

4) **Collaborating with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**: The director of the center has a history of collaboration with the WIC program. Projects that the center collaborated on with WIC are all related to women's and children's health. The goal of these collaborations is to increase positive outcomes among participants of the WIC program, who are low-income women and children. Projects included helping WIC moms maintain a healthy weight during and after pregnancy, assisting mothers with breastfeeding, and exploring the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on breastfeeding rates.

#### 4. **Organizational Structure and Governance**

The Center is jointly led by a director and a co-director, who are supported by faculty collaborators and student interns. The director and co-director hold monthly meetings, with additional meetings scheduled as needed.

#### 5. **Resources and Sustainability**

The center's activities are funded by research grants. Obesity continues to be a concern, so the center feels that support will continue.

## 6. Highlights and Accomplishments

The activities highlighted in the section 3 above has provided a great deal of publications and presentations over the past three years.

Mamudu, L., Li, J., McEligot, A. J., Wood, M., **Rusmevichientong, P.**, Tetteh-Bator, E., ... & Williams, F. (2024). Cancer worry and its impact on self-reported depressive symptoms among adult males and females in the US: a nationwide sample study. *BMC psychiatry*, 24(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-05405-4>

**Rusmevichientong, P.**, Chandler, L., Nguyen\*, K., & Jaynes, J. (2022). Ranking of snack attributes among parents in a minority community. *Nutrition Today*, 57(4), 217-220. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NT.0000000000000552>

**Rusmevichientong, P.**, Nguyen\*, H., Morales\*, C., Jaynes, J., & Wood, M. M. (2022). Food choices and hypertension among rural Thais: Evidence from a discrete choice experiment. *International Journal of Public Health*, 67, 1604850. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2022.1604850>

**Rusmevichientong, P.**, \*Ebrahim, R., \*Nila, J., \*Cheng, I., & Weiss, J., (2021). The new FDA nutrition facts labels and consumer purchase intentions: An effect of emotional tax. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour. Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1944>

**Rusmevichientong, P.** \* Morales, C., \*Castorena, G., Sapbamrer, R., Seesen, M., & Siviroj, P. (2021) Dietary salt-related determinants of hypertension in rural Northern Thailand. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 18(2), 377-392. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020377>

**Rusmevichientong, P.**, Jaynes, J., Chandler, L. (2021). Understanding influencing factors of snack preferences among underrepresented middle school students: Evidence from a discrete choice experiment. *Food Quality and Preference*, 91, p.104171 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2020.104171>

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McEligot, A.J., Caujungco, M.P., Behseta, S., Chandler, L., Chauhan, H., Mitra, S., **Rusmevichientong, P.**, Charles, S. (2018). Big Data Science Training Program at a Minority Serving Institution : Processes and Initial Outcomes. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 16(1), 1-5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6407619/pdf/nihms-1015388.pdf>

**Rusmevichientong, P.**, Mitra, S., McEligot, A.J., \*Navajas, E. (2018). The Association between Types of Soda Consumption and Overall Diet Quality: Evidence from National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 16(1), 24-35. <https://doi.org/10.32398/cjhp.v16i1.2121>

**Rusmevichientong, P.**, Albornoz, R., Chen, S., Lin, J., Kudilok, K., & Suchato, R. (2019). RiverPRO's Environmentally-Friendly Paper: Growing Through Sustainability. In *Asian Agribusiness Management: Case Studies in Growth, Marketing, and Upgrading Strategies* (pp. 133-150). [https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/abs/10.1142/9789813233140\\_0008](https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/abs/10.1142/9789813233140_0008)

Yepez, C. E., Anderson, C. E., Frost, E., Whaley, S. E., & **Koleilat, M.** (2023). Sleep duration is associated with household food insecurity and sugar-sweetened beverage intake among women, infants, and children participating children ages 0-5. *American Journal of Health Promotion: AJHP*, 8901171231225289. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171231225289>

Yusuf, H. M., **Koleilat, M.**, & Whaley, S. E. (2023). Prevalence and predictors of substantial postpartum weight retention among participants of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in Southern California. *American Journal of Health Promotion: AJHP*, 37(5), 675–680. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171221148840>

Matias, S. L., Anderson, C. E., & **Koleilat, M.** (2023). Breastfeeding moderates childhood obesity risk associated with prenatal exposure to excessive gestational weight gain. *Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 19(4), e13545. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13545>

**Koleilat, M.**, Whaley, S. E., & Clapp, C. (2022). The impact of COVID-19 on breastfeeding rates in a low-income population. *Breastfeeding Medicine : the official journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine*, 17(1), 33–37. <https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2021.0238>

**Koleilat, M.**, Vargas, N., vanTwist, V., & Kodjebacheva, G. D. (2021). Perceived barriers to and suggested interventions for physical activity during pregnancy among participants of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in Southern California. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 21(1), 69. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-03553>

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Gill, M., **Koleilat, M.**, & Whaley, S. E. (2018). The impact of food insecurity on the home emotional environment among low-income mothers of young children. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 22(8), 1146–1153. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-018-2499-9>

**Koleilat, M.**, Kim, L.P., & Whaley, S.E. (2017). Focusing on excessive gestational weight gain through weight tracking among participants of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in Southern California. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 15(3), 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.32398/cjhp.v15i3.1905>

**Koleilat, M.**, Whaley, S.E., Esguerra, K.B., Sekhobo, J.P. (2017). The role of WIC in obesity prevention. *Current Pediatrics Reports*, 5(3), 132–141. doi: 10.1007/s40124-017-0135-6.

Whaley, S.E., **Koleilat, M.**, Leonard, S., Whaley, M. (2017). Breastfeeding is associated with reduced odds of obesity in Hispanic 2-5-year-olds served by WIC. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 49, S144–S150.

## 7. **Planning and Strategic Outlook**

The director and co-director, as well as faculty collaborator meet at the end of each year to evaluate the center's goals for the upcoming year. Current goals include: seek additional grant funding, update the Center's website, provide internship opportunities, continue to disseminate research findings through peer-reviewed articles, books, book chapters, center briefs, community presentations and other related products.