Building Capacity and Recruiting for HIV Epidemiologic Studies with African, Caribbean and other Black Communities in Understudied Urban-Rural Locales: The BLACCH Study

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Abstract

CHALLENGE: London has the highest HIV infection rate in Canada. To understand this, the BLACCH Study aims to reach the community to learn about their needs, opinions, and experiences. This study focuses on a multi-stakeholder approach, engaging multiple stakeholders to understand and conduct research more effectively.

GOALS: To build capacity and enhance recruitment.

ACTIVITIES: The study engaged community members and service providers through networking and semi-ethnic workshops. Interviews were conducted with community members to identify research methods. People from different backgrounds were recruited, including those from the general population and specific communities.

Results

Team has sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the research
- Participants prefer a general health survey, and not just a survey about HIV
- Participants are comfortable using slang to describe behaviours or health conditions
- Participants are willing to recruit people in their networks for the survey

Effective promotion of the project and recruit potential respondents
- A broad audience using posters and media
- Make contact with individuals and leave them with information about the project
- Increase community's knowledge about the project and trust
- Keep community informed and increase sense of ownership
- Identify over 500 potential participants
- Distribute surveys in 8 months
- Recruit participants from a cross-section of the community
- All eligible participants respond to sensitive questions

Increase proportion of surveys returned
- Overall proportion of surveys returned increased from 20% to 35%
- Over 60% of surveys returned among persons receiving reminders
- Increase in snowballing

Conclusion

Community-based research is an appropriate approach to conducting epidemiologic research with hard-to-reach populations. The more engaged the community is, the more likely it is to get members of hard-to-reach populations to participate in the research.

References


Acknowledgements

The BLACCH Study Team: Monica Abdelkader, Michael Antwi, Shamara Baidoobonso, Greta Bauer, Sila Joshua, Erica Lawson, Roxanne Longman, Harina Mokanan, Mercy Nleya-Ncube and Daniel Pugh. The Black, African and Caribbean Canadian Health (BLACCH) Study aims to build capacity to conduct epidemiologic research with ACB people residing in London, Ontario. To enhance recruitment of ACB people into an epidemiologic study that uses convenience sampling for a self-administered, mail questionnaire.