Community engagement approach to address contributors to cancer health disparities in Worcester, MA. Community Health & Research: Making the Connections, UMass Medical School, Worcester, MA

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Community Engagement Approach to Address Contributors to Cancer Health Disparities in Worcester, MA
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Introduction

Community engagement

• Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting their well-being.
• The main goal of community engagement is to improve overall health outcomes as successful projects evolve into lasting collaborations.
• Approaches to health improvement must consider the concerns of communities in order to benefit diverse populations.

Cancer health disparities and socioeconomic status

• Cancer health disparities are adverse differences in cancer incidence, prevalence, mortality, survivorship, and burden or related health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United States (US).
• Low socioeconomic status (SES) is a factor that contributes to the observed cancer health disparities among racial, ethnic, and underserved groups.
• SES is most often based on a person's income, education level, and other factors, such as native language and household composition.

Objectives

1. To compare the racial / ethnic composition and SES factors in Worcester, Massachusetts (MA) with MA state and US. 
2. To compare SES factors by racial / ethnic groups in Worcester, MA. 
3. To discuss how community engagement research can address the contributors to cancer health disparities in Worcester, MA.

Method

Racial / ethnic composition and SES factors were collected from the US Census Bureau.

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Results

Discussion

Community of Worcester, MA

• The percentage of Hispanics, non-Hispanic (NH) Blacks, and NH Asians was higher in Worcester, MA population than in MA state in 2010.
• The percentage of families and people whose income is below the poverty level is higher in Worcester, MA than in MA state and US.
• The percentage of the population of Worcester, MA that has single-parent family households, non-family householders living alone, or speaks at home a language other than English is higher than in MA state and US.

Community engagement approach to the contributors to cancer health disparities

• Principles of community organization should be followed to approach to and should be instilled into individuals from all races and ethnicities.
• Economic, educational, and social services institutions should effectively play their role while sharing the responsibility to enhance the well-being of the community.
• The improvement of socioeconomic factors will facilitate the successful implementation of cancer programs (awareness, prevention, screening, diagnosis, clinical research / trials, and survivorship, etc.) in the community.

Conclusion

• Community engagement research is necessary to tackle the SES factors that can contribute to cancer health disparities in Worcester, MA.

References


Acknowledgements

• Yvonne N. García-Carreras, MPH and Antonio Aponte-Feliciano, MD for helpful discussion.
• Brian C. Lewis, PhD: National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute Research Supplement to Promote Diversity in Health-related Research.