

Evaluation of Health Educational Programming for Senior Citizens At S. Presa
Community Center

Kimberly Kay Garza, BSN, RN
Irene Gillard, MSN, RN
Sara Kolb, PhD, RN
Jean Deliganis, PhD, RN
University of the Incarnate Word

Abstract

Background

Low-income elders may be socially isolated and lack informal networks of support. This population also underutilizes non-emergency health care services because of barriers related to culture, language and poverty. Among predominantly Hispanic low-income elders in San Antonio, Texas, health problems include high rates of diabetes, hypertension, depression and loneliness. Lack of income and lack of education can result in decreased compliance with medical regimens. Community Centers serving senior citizens have the potential to provide a place for assisting low-income elders through health screening and education, and provision of social support.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the health and health education needs among senior citizens participating in the St Philip of Jesus program at Presa Community Center. Program data from February 2003 to May 2004 using retrospective review of an electronic database were analyzed

Methodology

Design: Descriptive, retrospective electronic database review.

Setting: St. Philip of Jesus Health Ministry, a partnership between St. Philip of Jesus Parish and the School of Nursing & Health Professions at the University of the Incarnate Word, offers health education and health screening programs at the Presa Community Center, which served as the setting for this project. Data from health screenings and surveys are kept in an electronic database.

Sample: A sample of 57 citizens who attended programs at the S. Presa Community Center was subjects for the project.

Procedure: Data were obtained from volunteer senior citizens through survey and health screenings conducted in the South Presa Center February, 2003, to May 26, 2004, as part of a health education program conducted by the Ministerio de Salud, a partnership between St. Philip of Jesus Parish and the School of Nursing & Health Professionals at the University of the Incarnate Word.

Outcomes: The sample consisted of low-income predominantly Mexican American senior citizens participating in the Presa community center. The mean age of the sample was 73 years (SD=10yrs). Seventy-four percent (42) were female and 26% (15) were male. Over half 29 of participants had a primary care provider. Almost one-third of participants had not received pneumonia immunization.

Over half reported hypertension and over 20% reported diabetes as a health problem. The mean blood pressure for the sample was 135/74 at the beginning of the program. Twenty one percent of seniors had blood pressures in the hypertensive range; more women than men had higher blood pressures.

Conclusion: Despite a high patient participation with a primary care physician a proportionate amount of seniors attending the community-based center have basic health and education needs. The programs wanted by the seniors are education on hypertension, advance directives, and file of life. Future research is needed on compliance of seniors with health care regimens and barriers to care.

Funding: The project was funded impart by a grant from the National Institute of General Medical Science (1 R25 GM070420) Bridges to the Doctorate.