Windshield Survey Assessment Review

Name

Institutional Affiliation

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Introduction

The Windshield survey conducted on West Englewood provides a lot of data on the health concerns of the community. There is information about the population, lifestyle, risks factors contributing to the primary health concerns and barriers making it difficult to implement change. This report seeks to inform management of different levels in the healthcare system about a way of improving the health status of West Englewood residents that is significantly below the national average. The research of the primary health concerns and the evidence-based practice approach are used to come up with a strategy to solve the issue. This report draws on the Windshield research results to derive a strategy to alleviate the situation in West Englewood.

The primary health concern within West Englewood is obesity, with a survey by Sinai Urban Health Institute indicating that more than 50% of women in the area are obese, which is high in comparison to the national average of 36% according to Ogden, Caroll, Fryar & Flegal, (2015). Obesity increases risks of other chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, as well as stroke and heart disease. Unsurprisingly, some of the diseases associated with obesity were among the major causes of death in West Englewood, with heart disease rate standing at 309 per 100,000 people in comparison to a national average of 201 (Holy Cross Hospital, 2013). This disparity can be explained by the rate of smoking in the area, with more than 50% of adult men and approximately 46% women smoking compared to a 15% overall in the United States (Sweeney, 2017). Another health concern within West Englewood is the high rate of mental health issues, where the average for Chicago is 203 compared to a national average of 68 (Holy Cross Hospital, 2013).

One of the main ways of tackling this issue is educating the population about obesity and its associated health problems. While evidence indicates that a large proportion of the population is obese, the lifestyle of the community has not changed. Further evidence from the Windshield survey indicates a low level of education. Data suggests that about 41% of the population did not go to college and only 9.1% graduated with a Bachelor’s degree (Onboard Informatics, 2014). Nurses serving in this area need to provide more information to the community concerning the ways of preventing and improving this condition. One of the strategies is increasing the amount of physical activities and changing feeding habits.

The research identified several factors contributing to the difficulty of promoting and preventing diseases in the selected population. These are the same factors responsible for the prevalence of the primary health concerns in the area (Holy Cross Hospital, 2013). One of them is low educational achievements within West Englewood as the majority of population lack higher education (Onboard Informatics, 2014). Other causes of the health problems identified as barriers to health promotion and disease prevention including stress, poor diet, lack of social support, lack of exercises among others (Sinai Health System, 2016).

Other factors identified as barriers to health improvement included lack of trust in institutions, lack of skills among health providers within the area, and resistance to change. One of the reasons many people did not seek access to skilled health providers was because of the absence of insurance. Many of the focus groups that discussed the barriers to health promotion within West Englewood cited the lack of mental health facilities as one of the reasons many people within the area do not get treatment (Holy Cross Hospital, 2013).

Among these reasons, several can be easily alleviated with building trust and proper health education. The issue of lack of trust in institutions was found to not only affect hospitals, but also food industry. Many focus groups showed lack of trust in food packaging companies (Sinai Urban Health Institute, 2017). An explanation of security regulations imposed on such companies to ensure the safety of food can build trust in such institutions. Given the lack of trust to hospitals, nurses and other practitioners and providers, there is a need to focus on addressing the racial, cultural and social disparities that lead to such insecurities. Considering the area is predominantly populated by African Americans, healthcare facilities within West Englewood can increase the number of nurses and providers who understand the community and can rebuild trust. For other ethnically diverse parts of the area, employment of nurses who understand local language can improve the situation.

Employing nurses and practitioners who are well conversant with addressing racially and culturally diverse population is crucial for engaging the community in all initiatives necessary for improving health. There are a few types of healthcare initiatives put in place by other organizations such as the Chicago Department of Public Health that has launched several projects to improve the health of the residents of Chicago city. Some of the initiatives include expansion of partnerships, engaging the community, improving education, promoting behavioral health and preventing chronic and infectious diseases amongst others (Dircksen & Prachand, 2016). The partnership sought by the city of Chicago focuses on including all communities and players alongside with private and public institutions. In the prevention of chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and heart diseases, the initiative seeks to change this through improving behavioral health promotion to discourage habits such as smoking, unhealthy eating and lack of physical activity. They have also created an overweight education program that seeks to help the affected population change their lifestyle choices (HCH, 2013).

Recommendation

From the evidence provided by the Windshield survey, the best approach to alleviating the situation is establishing the contact with the community to increase health awareness and promote education. Many people within the community may be aware of the situation but lack the knowledge required to make changes that can improve their health. With improved health education, residents can make better and informed decisions concerning their lifestyle. Such an education initiative can be done through sponsored community events, schools, and hospitals. Schools and hospitals can be the starting points for educating the population concerning the health risks. When patients visit the hospital, nurses and community health providers should inform patients of ways to improve their health. In conclusion, the evidence point to the need for health education among the population and training of healthcare providers paying special attention to the needs and disparity of the community.

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