

Exploring Community-Based Strategies to Overcome Barriers to Hypertension Education and Management in Underserved Areas

Ugonna Adindu¹, Lynn Witty^{1, 2},

Indiana University School of Medicine¹; Ball State University - Healthy Lifestyle Center²

Objective:

In the United States, there are over 119.9 million adults who have been diagnosed with hypertension, representing nearly half of the adult population. Of this population with high blood pressure, 75% of Americans' hypertension remains uncontrolled. Such control rates are significantly lower among individuals of racial and ethnic minorities as compared to their white counterparts, especially those in underserved areas. We hypothesize that the identification of community-based interventions and strategies to combat barriers to hypertension treatment and education could improve management in these populations.

Project Methods:

In this study, we looked through various peer reviewed articles on community-based care and hypertension rates among minorities, exploring study design and limitations to develop a questionnaire focused on access to hypertension education. This survey was distributed randomly during outreach events around Muncie, Indiana to anyone who wished to participate, non-minority groups included. The questionnaire asked about various hypertension and healthcare barrier identification factors with a final question of whether said participant would benefit from a hypertension education course.

Results:

The participants' responses were across the board. Regarding hypertension knowledge, participants were asked about their diagnosis, as well as their level of knowledge of hypertension and its management; participants exhibited varying levels of knowledge. Understanding key aspects of management, including medication adherence, diet, physical activity, and potential complications and warning signs, also varied among participants. Overall, these preliminary survey results highlight the diverse characteristics and experiences of participants related to hypertension, access to healthcare, and hypertension knowledge.

Potential Impact:

This study could provide information for those looking to establish community-based organizations in underserved areas. Increasing the magnitude of such teams and advocating for more interventions against barriers to hypertension education could increase not only the health of those in such communities, but also the overall wellbeing of all people in the United States.