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Conference Abstract

Integrated Healthcare via a Community Health Fair along an International Border: Tackling Multi-morbidities and Health Inequalities through Team Learning Experiences

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Abstract

Introduction: The Rio Grande Valley (RGV) consists of 4 counties along the Texas-Mexico border. The population is over 90% Hispanic with unique issues that impact healthcare. Among them are high prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiovascular Disease, and Obesity. The poverty level for this region is considerably higher than the national average. According to Census data, about 75% of RGV residents speak a language other than English at home, and average 12% Bachelor's degree or higher attainment. Due to multiple socioeconomic challenges and low health literacy this population also suffers from multiple health inequalities. In order to address these complex issues, the College of Health Sciences and Human Services has initiated an integrated model of health care professional teams (Pharmacy, Nursing, and Physician Assistant and other disciplines) to provide health screenings for prevalent chronic diseases via a community health fair.

Methods: Through this integrated approach we seek to establish models for shared learning, to build a foundation for future professional practice and to prepare students for patient-centered care. Through this approach we aim to form an optimal strategy to tackle the complex multiple morbidities of the largely Hispanic RGV population by utilizing the expertise from each discipline. This highly innovative approach utilizes students and faculty serving the attendees of the health fair. Many members of the healthcare team are community members themselves, and thus have direct insight into the problems that the community faces. Data collection will include a snapshot of blood pressure, blood glucose, total cholesterol and high density lipoprotein values. Teams will also survey participants regarding their knowledge of causes and dynamics of the diseases prevalent in the community. The teams will provide health promotion information, and

effectiveness of their teaching methods will be assessed by means of a post-test survey. Additionally each group according to their discipline will be surveyed regarding interest in teamwork, negative and positive professional identity, and roles and responsibilities by means of the Readiness for Inter-professional Learning Scale (RIPLS).

Results: The results of this project are pending. However, we anticipate a positive impact both on the educational interventions on health fair attendees as well as on the inter-professional teams, as determined by the RIPLS.

Conclusions: The impact of the integrated health care team will be advantageous to both the community of the RGV as well as the future health care practitioners. The success of this project lays the foundation for interdisciplinary integration of care in the RGV.

Keywords

integrated healthcare; health inequalities; international; community engagement

PowerPoint presentation

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