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Title

Community Voices for Health: Developing methods of engagement in Somali immigrant communities in the era of COVID-19

Priority 1 (Research Category)

COVID-19

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: The Somali community in Minnesota has suffered a disproportionate impact of COVID-19. Engaging community members in COVID-19 patient centered outcome related research will be needed to find effective ways to address these disparities. However, COVID-19 disrupted usual methods of community engagement and research is needed to identify how to continue effective engagement.

Objective: The Community Voices for Health study explored methods of community engagement and Somali patient and community member priorities for ongoing COVID-19 patient centered research.

Study Design: We conducted a survey to engage community members for input on 1) preferred methods of community engagement to ensure broad reach in the community, 2) views on the priorities for COVID-19 related PCOR/CER topics, and 3) views on capacity building needed to support participation in patient centered research projects.

Setting or Dataset: 40 Community Ambassadors were recruited to conduct a community-based survey.

Population studied: 940 Somali adult patients and community members responded to the survey across the State of Minnesota. 55% identified as female. 77% of participants were born abroad. A range of ages, education levels and household size were represented

Results: Survey participants were asked if they had been asked for their input on COVID-19 by any organization or institution and 23% (n=194) indicated they had been asked for their views and 77% (n=653) said they had not. The top three preferred methods of engagement were to participate in engagement by phone (n=533), text message (n=367) and socially distanced in person (n=227). Survey participants were provided with a list of 14 different topics relating to COVID-19, which were identified in collaboration with a Community Advisory Group. The top three topics considered a priority for future research in relation to COVID-19 were the care provided to Somali patients with COVID-19, ways to

encourage prevention of COVID-19 and experiences of racism in the health system in seeking help for COVID-19

Conclusions: The Somali community in Minnesota is very engaged and keen to participate in community engagement when it is presented in a culturally relevant, trusted way. The survey was able to use methods that supported a reach across the state of Minnesota and is one of the most comprehensive engagement efforts conducted with the Somali community in Minnesota on any topic.