

Submission Id: 2664

Title

Enhancing participant diversity during recruitment for a national COVID-19 Surveillance Study Using Stakeholder Engagement

Priority 1 (Research Category)

COVID-19

Presenters

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Abstract

In May 2020 A COVID-19 Community Research Partnership, a surveillance study aimed at learning about the spread of the COVID-19 virus in local communities and among healthcare workers, began. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on low-income and racial/ethnic minority groups, recruitment strategies that enabled diverse representation and engagement were used. We describe a community based participatory approach to engage a stakeholder advisory board to guide recruitment and data collection.

Study Design was a community based participatory research study. Approximately 30 participants comprise the SAB. The study recruits participants from a large metropolitan area, and Atrium Health, a large, vertically integrated, not-for-profit healthcare system.

Population Studied >12,000 community participants

Outcome Measures recruitment and demographics of participants

Results With SAB guidance we recruited >12,000 participants. The highly engaged stakeholders provided valuable input to guide the development of recruitment materials (~flyers, emails, social media, websites, videos); use of incentives (free phones to complete the online symptom survey); and community outreach opportunities (primary care practices in underserved neighborhoods; COVID-19 mobile testing units located in underserved communities; mask giveaway events; and the local public school system) The SAB identified groups that the research team then partnered with to share information about the study (Village Heart BEAT, a community-based organization aimed at improving the health of African American and Hispanic populations; and HealthCare System employee affinity groups serving Hispanic/Latino and African American communities). Demographics include 90% White/Caucasian, 5% Black/African American; 3% Hispanic and 2% Asian or Pacific Islander; 38% are healthcare workers; 67% are female.

Conclusions Use of a community stakeholder advisory board has enhanced understanding and participation in a COVID-19 Community Research Partnership. Engaging diverse community stakeholders early in the research process was essential for ensuring data collection efforts are patient-centered and tailored to reach diverse communities.