Recruitment & Retention of Ethnically and Culturally Diverse Populations in Community-based Research

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Purpose of Presentation

- Present strategies for recruitment and retention of participants specific to community-based research
- To provide guidance on methodological and practical issues related to conducting research with ethnically and culturally diverse populations
Community-based Research

- Engages community members and academic researchers equally in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each partner brings (Israel et al., 1998)

- Community members actively participate in all aspects of the research process (Schulz et al., 1997), with the ultimate goal of empowering communities toward social change (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2002)

- Adds valuable input and guidance to the research process

- Establishes trust and rapport with community members
Barriers to Recruitment

• Researcher level barriers
• Multicultural differences
• Connection into the community
• Trust among community members
Barriers to Recruitment

- Participant level barriers
- Distrust of researcher/research
- Cultural differences
- Language
- Fear
- Time
- Little experience with research
Hmong Breast & Cervical Cancer Project

- Examined breast and cervical cancer screening among the Hmong in Oregon; 2009-2011 (NCI R21; PI: Thorburn)

- Qualitative study; interviewed both women and men
  - 17 key informant interviews
  - 84 in-depth interviews
Building Community Partnerships & Support

• Worked with community leaders and members from study conception to implementation
• Worked through a community-based organization
  • Church, temple, social service agency
• Collaborated with community leaders and other knowledgeable individuals
Building Community Partnerships & Support

- Community partnerships during project development strengthened grant application
- Smooth transition to project implementation
- Partnership with local community based organization was beneficial
  - Project visibility
  - Builds trust with community
Establishing & Working with a Community Advisory Committee

• Community leaders agreed to serve on advisory committee
• Formalized and recruited additional committee members
• Members introduced and supported project
Establishing & Working with Community Advisory Committee

• Committee assisted project in multiple ways:
  • Community assets and resources
  • Procedures and materials
  • Culturally appropriate
  • Problem-solving
  • Well received by the Hmong community
Inclusion of Cultural Insiders on Research Team

• Hired bilingual, bicultural field staff
• Hired another research team member who is Hmong with an NCI diversity supplement
• Ethnic and gender matching of field staff and participant
• Bilingual, bicultural Co-Investigator involvement in study design
Inclusion of Cultural Insiders on Research Team

• Challenges:
  • Small pool of candidates for field staff
  • Training and monitoring labor- and time-intensive with communities that are less familiar with research
  • Language and literacy issues
Recruitment Strategies

• Culturally appropriate methods and materials

• Targeted advertisement
Recruitment Strategies

- Face-to-face networking
- Word-of-mouth
- Personal connection with community
- Timing of recruitment
- Cultural celebrations
- Combine with other community events
Retention Strategies

• Persistence
• Intensive follow-up
• Obtain alternate contact information
• Contact with same research staff over time
• Bicultural, ethnically and linguistically matched research staff
• Demonstrate sensitivity to participant’s situation
Retention Strategies

• Reduce barriers to participation
• Access
  • Convenient time and location for data collection activities
• Provide incentives
• Transportation
• Childcare
Conclusions

• Successful recruitment and retention is grounded in a well-trained, bicultural, ethnically and linguistically matched research team

• Involvement of investigators from populations with substantive health disparities is critical

• Strong community partnerships are central to community-based research

• Culturally appropriate methods and materials
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