

Assessing an Intervention to Improve Clinical Trial Perceptions Among Predominately African-American Communities in South Carolina

Marvella Ford, PhD¹, Amy Wahlquist, MS¹, Rashell Blake², CoDanielle Green³, June Streets⁴, Ebonie Fuller³, Erica Johnson, MD¹, Melanie Jefferson¹, James Etheredge, MPA¹, Heidi Varner⁵, Shannon Johnson⁶, Saundra Glover, PhD⁷, David Turner, PhD¹, Elizabeth Garrett-Mayer, PhD¹

(1) Medical University of South Carolina, Voorhees College; (2) Voorhees College; (3) South Carolina State University; (4). Georgetown University; (5) Ridgeville, South Carolina; (6) South Carolina Cancer Alliance; (7) University of South Carolina

What Is the Purpose of this Study/Review?

- The purpose of this study was to conduct a cancer clinical trials education intervention among predominantly African-American populations in South Carolina, which has high rates of cancer deaths.
- Lack of knowledge about trials can lead to having negative perceptions of them.
- The investigators tested whether an intervention focusing on increasing knowledge about cancer clinical trials would lead to more positive perceptions of them and thus to a greater likelihood of trial participation.

What Is the Problem?

- Cancer clinical trials provide opportunities to test new screening techniques, therapies, and disease markers that could reduce cancer disparities.
- Even though they have significantly higher rates of new cancer cases and cancer death than European Americans, African Americans are much less likely to participate in cancer clinical trials.

What Are the Findings?

- For each item on the survey that was used to measure the impact of the intervention on perceptions of clinical trials, the majority of participants changed from more negative perceptions to more positive perceptions.
- These findings were highly statistically significant.

Who Should Care Most?

- This information is of great importance to people who are working to improve the health of their communities. Community engagement activities were embedded in the design of the intervention. These activities included identifying community partners; including community partners in the scheduling of the intervention, the identification of intervention sites, and recruitment of participants; and working with the community partners to sustain the conduct of the intervention over time. It is important to note that all of the participants in the cancer clinical trials education intervention received materials that they could use to conduct their own cancer clinical trials education training programs. The rationale for disseminating these materials was to assist participants in sharing cancer clinical trials information with others in their own communities. Therefore, a “Train the Trainer” approach was employed in the clinical trials education intervention. Forty of the trained participants/lay facilitators have conducted 104 sessions, reaching 3,292 community members, although data on sociodemographic characteristics or intervention outcomes are not available for these individuals.

Recommendation for Action

- The intervention could easily be disseminated widely throughout other communities in the United States.
- In most of these communities, African Americans and other medically underserved populations have much higher rates of cancer death than other groups and could greatly benefit from the intervention.