

**Title of Intervention:** Community-based cardiovascular disease risk prevention

**Intervention Strategies:** Campaigns and Promotions, Group Education, Individual Education, Environments and Policies

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To decrease mortality due to coronary heart disease in rural community residents

**Population:** Community residents

**Setting:** Six counties in the rural Bootheel region of southeast Missouri; community-based

**Partners:** Missouri Department of Health

**Intervention Description:** Six county coalitions received about \$5,000 a year to implement community-based interventions. The interventions were selected from a list of possible cardiovascular disease-related strategies provided by project staff.

- Campaigns and Promotions: Prevention-themed poster contests were sponsored by local schools. Winning entries were placed in a local newspaper. A weekly newspaper column on heart disease prevention also ran in a local newspaper. Local churches sponsored Heart Healthy Sundays.
- Group Education: Communities sponsored aerobic exercise classes, heart healthy cooking demonstrations, cardiovascular disease education programs, exercise demonstrations, walking clubs and heart disease education sermons.
- Individual Education: Communities held blood pressure, cholesterol screenings, hypertension and diabetes screenings.
- Environments and Policies: Communities constructed walking and fitness paths. Churches developed policies of providing heart healthy meals at functions.

**Theory:** Planned Approach to Community Health Model

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: Community volunteers
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Computer, printer
- Space: Classroom space
- Budget: \$5,000 per year for each community
- Intervention: Posters, newspapers, cooking demonstration materials, hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol screening materials
- Evaluation: Survey, phones, phone directory, access to newspaper microfilm and statistical analysis software

**Evaluation:**

- Design: Cross-sectional
- Methods and Measures:
  - Survey assessed cardiovascular risk factors, demographics, coalition exposure, arthritis, functional status and quality of life
  - Media content analysis of 23 newspapers in target counties

**Outcomes:**

- Short term Impact: The average number of articles per month in the post-intervention period was significantly higher than in the pre-intervention period. There was a significant improvement in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had their cholesterol checked in the previous 2 years. African Americans in the study area showed improvement for each of the five risk factors (physical inactivity, smoker, fruits and veggies, overweight, and cholesterol check), but findings were not always significant.
- Long Term Impact: Not measured

**Maintenance:** Coalition meetings were held on a regular basis.

**Lessons Learned:** The decline in physical inactivity and increase in cholesterol screening suggest that a community-level reduction in cardiovascular disease risk may be achievable through relatively low-cost interventions that combine educational efforts with environmental changes. The findings suggest that smaller newspapers that are published less frequently (i.e., three times/week or weekly) may be more receptive to publishing cardiovascular health information.

**Citation(s):**

Brownson, R. C., C. A. Smith, et al. (1996). "Preventing cardiovascular disease through community-based risk reduction: the Bootheel Heart Health Project." *Am J Public Health* 86(2): 206-13.

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