

Editorial

Community Health Care: An Essential Tool to Improve Population Health

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Community Health Care in the United States (US) and Canada

According to Healthy People 2020, community-based programs help in disease prevention, the improvement of health, and the promotion of quality of life. The article entitled “Barriers and Facilitators to Healthy Lifestyle among Refugees Resettled in the United States” described community-based healthy lifestyle education classes for refugees resettled in the US and examined barriers and facilitators to the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle [1]. Refugees resettled in the US often experience poor diet, and physical inactivity, and increased risks for chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease [2]. Community-based healthy lifestyle programs would be beneficial in order to improve lifestyles of individuals with refugee background. This article describes an innovative community approach to deliver healthy lifestyle education to individuals with refugee background.

The other article from the US entitled “Motivations and Outcomes of Volunteers at a Non-Student-Run Free Clinic” focuses on volunteers at a free clinic that treats the uninsured. Free clinics in the US rely on volunteers to provide health care services [3]. Student-run free clinics have student volunteers who are interested in utilizing volunteer experiences for their education and careers [4,5]. However, there are a number of non-student-run free clinics that may have volunteers who have more diverse purposes and expectations. This article addresses insightful analysis on motivations and outcomes of volunteering at a non-student-run free clinic and contributes to the improvement of volunteer recruitment, training and retention.

One article from Canada entitled “An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Adult Multiracial Community Mental Health Clients in a Metro Vancouver City” explored multiracial community mental health services. According to the 2011 Census, more than half of people in Vancouver were not European Canadians [6]. Non-European Canadians in Vancouver have diverse background such as Chinese, South Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Latin American, Korean, and Aboriginal [6]. In cities with such diverse populations, it is critical to develop mental health services that meet a variety of needs, reflecting the diversity of the cities inhabitants. The knowledge that this article offers would help in better understanding how multiracial community mental health services operate.

Community Health Care in Africa

While health outcomes of people living in Africa have been trending upwards, there are still numerous challenges

to meet global and regional targets health outcomes which is essential to strengthen health systems [7]. Community-directed interventions have the potential to reinforce health systems and enrich health outcomes in Africa [8,9]. Two articles from Africa, “Assessment of Factors Affecting the Implementation of the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response in Public Health Care Facilities- The Case of Rufunsa District, Zambia” and “Birth Preparedness and Complication Readiness Plan among Antenatal Care Attendants in Kofale District, South East Ethiopia: A Cross Sectional Survey” are important sources to enhance community health care in Africa.

Disease surveillance is very vital to ensure ongoing public health data collection and analysis that is used for public health actions [10]. The article from Zambia shows strategies to implement disease surveillance that can be applied to other African countries. In addition to the development of the disease surveillance, maternal health is a significant health issue since maternal mortality rate is still high in Africa [11]. Most maternal deaths can be prevented if women have access to antenatal care, skilled care and care after childbirth [11]. In contrast, the article from Ethiopia focuses on birth preparedness and antenatal complication readiness plans, adding valuable information to a topic lacking in research.

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