

Location and Organizational Features: What Type of Veteran Communities Participate in Health Programs?

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What is the Purpose of this Study?

- To identify the factors associated with community-based veterans service organization units' decision to participate in a health promotion project called the POWER Program.
- To help people who want to find community organizations that are willing to participate in a health promotion program.

What Is the Problem?

- Despite studies that have demonstrated improved health outcomes for members of organizations that engage in health initiatives, most community-based organizations do not participate in health promotion programs for their members.
- Few studies have examined factors associated with the decision to participate at an organizational level.

What Are the Findings?

- We found that veterans organizations were more likely to participate in a health promotion program if (1) they had more members, (2) more members attended the organization's regular meetings, (3) they had a regular newsletter, (4) there was an affiliated Women's Auxiliary, and (5) they were not more than 44 miles from the medical center leading the health promotion program.
- In multivariable analyses, only the size of the organization and the resources (socioeconomic status) of the community where the organization was based determined participation.
- Almost none of these organizations had previously participated in health promotion activities.

Who Should Care Most?

- Academics seeking community partners for health promotion activities.
- Public health officials trying to expand programs by partnering with existing community organizations.
- Researchers trying to understand the factors that influence organizational decision making around the decision to participate in a health promotion project.

Recommendations for Action

- If you are seeking community partners for a health promotion program, you should consider the human and material resources of organizations that you would like to participate. You will need more vigorous and sustained efforts if you seek the participation of small organizations with limited resources.
- Other researchers need to confirm our findings in other types of organizations.