The Cancer PEAK Study: A needs assessment of cancer prevention educational needs in a remote Caribbean community

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**BACKGROUND**

- In 2013, the Pan American Health Organization issued a call for improving primary cancer prevention among indigenous populations in the Caribbean.
- Cervical cancer disproportionately affects women in this region
  - 36,000 cervical cancer deaths in 2012
  - 3 times the cervical cancer rate in North America

**SPECIFICAIMS**

**Aim 1:** Assess knowledge of cancer prevention and cancer screening tests.
**Aim 2:** Identify community strengths, strategies for health education, and future research.

**METHODS**

**Health Belief Model**
- Incorporates individual perceptions, modifying factors, and likelihood of action to explain barriers to preventive health behaviors.

**Recruitment & Eligibility**
- Recruited at the Salybia Mission Project Clinic from September to December 2016 (N=36)
- Eligibility: Ages 18 and older

**Data Collection**
- 57-item survey about cancer prevention behaviors, attitudes, and cancer screening tests for cervical, breast, and colorectal cancer.
- One-time focus group on: 1) Cancer prevention behaviors, attitudes, and screening 2) Strategies for health education and future research

**Data Analysis**
- Descriptive and inferential statistics on survey data
- Inductive theme validation of focus group data through discussions among research staff

**RESULTS**

Table 1. Demographics (N=36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N(%)</th>
<th>Education*</th>
<th>N(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-39</td>
<td>12(33)</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>24(67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>8(22)</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>7(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥50</td>
<td>16(44)</td>
<td>Some college/graduate</td>
<td>4(11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1: Knowledge of Cervical cancer and Human Papillomavirus**

- **Heard of cervical cancer**
- **Heard of HPV**
- **Most people get HPV**
- **Heard of HPV vaccine**
- **HPV causes cervical cancer**

**Figure 2: Likelihood of engaging in cancer prevention behaviors and health education summary, Health Belief Model**

- **Individual Perceptions**
  - High perceived likelihood of being diagnosed with cancer
  - Knowledge
  - Likelihood of action

- **Modifying Factors**
  - Access to healthcare
  - Accessibility

- **Likelihood of Action**
  - Health education
  - Cues to action

**KEY FINDINGS**

- While most participants had heard of cervical cancer before, the majority had never heard of HPV or the HPV vaccine.
- Only 16.7% knew HPV can cause cervical cancer.
- Strategies for future health education include:
  - Embracing strong community ties
  - Facilitating culturally tailored messages about cancer prevention and screening
  - Health education at routine healthcare visits
  - Targeted materials for low literacy rates
- Access to HPV vaccination and fecal immunochemical tests are immediate, cost-effective, cancer prevention priorities.

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