

Student led community health checks in regional Victoria: A mixed methods study

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Handling editor: Fiona Robards

Abstract

Issue Addressed: Inequitable health care access can be addressed by using community outreach programs. A collaborative, codesigned student-led pop-up health check clinic was conducted in three low-socioeconomic regional communities in Victoria, Australia. Supervised undergraduate nursing students conducted free health checks, practiced assessment and communication skills, and provided health education.

Methods: A mixed-method approach was used to evaluate the impact, outcome, and processes used to deliver health checks in three different community settings. Data included post-check surveys and follow-up interviews with community participants, which were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Results: A total of 166 surveys were collected and 30 interviews conducted from community participants located in three different communities. Participants were very satisfied with the information provided in the clinics and the delivery process. Further analysis also identified three major themes: (1) *Defining a need*, (2) *Reaching the Community*, and (3) *Health promotion benefits*.

Conclusions: Community outreach programs are effective in reaching vulnerable populations, improving community access to risk screening, reducing demands, supporting existing services, and providing excellent training opportunities for the future health care workforce within communities.

So What? Further planning and financial investment are required to support community outreach programs that provide disease prevention and risk screening. More investment is needed in promoting outreach services within vulnerable populations, where social determinants contribute to poor health outcomes and access to health care is limited. Collaborative programs such as student-led pop-up clinics, are one way outreach can make a difference to community health.

KEYWORDS

health assessment, outreach, primary health care, regional community, student led

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