

HOW CAN COMMUNITY-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS ENCOURAGE DATA-DRIVEN CHANGE BEYOND STUDY PARTICIPATION? EVALUATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND FUTURE ENGAGEMENT OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

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Abstract

Community-academic partnerships are strongest when study participants are continuously engaged in data-driven change, even after the completion of the original research. This study was conducted to determine whether an *active* or *passive* recruitment approach would increase participant interest in future engagement. The effects of these techniques were measured in eight communities in the East End of Richmond, Virginia using a cross-sectional survey to determine community-wide health measures. Recruitment approach is not significant in generating interest in result dissemination; however, an *active* recruitment technique generated more interest in an intensive focus group about community health. Researchers interested in community-academic partnerships need to actively reach out to participants in order to strengthen their research and to engage the community.

Introduction

The Seventh District Health & Wellness Initiative Survey (SDHWS) partnered with the residents of the East End of Richmond, Virginia and the Seventh District Health & Wellness Initiative (HWI) to gather baseline data about their community’s health using a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach. Understanding how recruitment techniques affect future engagement of survey participants is crucial for preserving community-academic partnerships. However, partnership alone will not encourage study participation or future engagement. Community-academic partnerships are ephemeral if study participants are not interested in future engagement, therefore community engaged researchers must establish trust and build relationships with community members in order to spur future engagement to enact data-driven change.

Study Goal

The study aims to determine whether a dual recruitment approach, using either active or passive recruitment methods, present a significant difference in future community engagement of survey participants.

Methods

Study Population
One thousand eighty three (1,083) participants ages 18-82 in the East End of Richmond, Virginia completed a base-line health survey. Two recruitment methods were created using constructive dialogue between community members and academic researchers. Data only from participants who answered the survey via active or passive recruitment were used (N = 1,071).

Statistical Analysis
Chi-square and t-test analysis assessed the relationship between recruitment type and post-survey involvement using the “car,”¹ “gmodels,”² and “polycor”³ packages in R v 3.3.0.

Methods

Measures
Passive Recruitment. Survey administrators partnered with local organizations that provide services to the community. Consequently, residents came to the survey location where research team members were located.
Active Recruitment. Survey administrators developed community events and collected door-to-door data alongside resident team members. This approach brought survey administrators to potential participants.
Future Study-Related Engagement. The survey assessed future involvement using two items: “Are you interested in learning about the overall results from health related surveys like this in the future?” and “Would you like to participate in a focus group and provide feedback on this survey?”

Results

- Of all participants, 51.6% (N = 553) were actively recruited.
- There were significant differences in active or passive recruitment by sex ($X^2_{(DF=1)} = 13.87, p < 0.001$), age ($t = -8.77, df = 983, p < 0.001$), and socioeconomic status ($X^2_{(DF=9)} = 115.56, p < 0.001$), as measured by educational attainment.
- Women, individuals with lower SES, and younger people were more likely to be recruited actively.
- There was no significant association between recruitment type and interest in receiving survey results ($r = 0.09, p = 0.15$).
- There was a significant association between recruitment type and interest in future participation in a focus group ($r = 0.17, p = 0.002$). Those who received *active* recruitment were more interested in focus group participation.
- People who received *active* recruitment indicated interest in receiving health-related information on healthier eating ($r = 0.19, p < 0.001$). However, these individuals were less interested in learning about dealing with anger without getting physical ($r = -0.11, p = 0.028$), and quitting smoking ($r = -0.10, p = 0.013$).

Results

Table 1. Study Sample Demographics

Measure	N	%	Total N
Recruitment Type			
Active	553	51.6%	1071
Passive	518	48.4%	1071
Interest in learning about study results			
	792	85.9%	921
Interest in focus group participation*			
	339	36.6%	926
Gender*			
Male	340	32.4%	1048
Female	708	67.6%	1048
Education*			
Less than high school	363	35.2%	1030
High school	201	19.5%	1030
GED	105	10.2%	1030
Business, trade, or vocational school	49	4.8%	1030
Some college credit, but no degree	134	13.0%	1030
Associate's Degree	54	5.2%	1030
Bachelor's Degree	66	6.4%	1030
Master's Degree or Higher	58	5.6%	1030

*Significant association with recruitment type.

Conclusions

- Active and passive recruitment techniques are equally effective in generating interest for general results dissemination
- Active requirement may encourage more intensive involvement such as later focus group participation
- Researchers interested in continuing community engagement should work with established community organizations to determine the most effective form of *active* recruitment techniques
- Convenience sampling limits the extent of results therefore future studies should incorporate random sampling methodologies

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¹John Fox and Sanford Weisberg (2011). An {R} Companion to Applied Regression, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage. URL:<http://socserv.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~fox/Books/Companion>
²Gregory R. Warnes, Ben Bolker, Thomas Lumley, Randall C Johnson. Contributions from Randall C. Johnson are Copyright SAIC-Frederick, Inc. Funded by the Intramural Research Program, of the NIH, National Cancer Institute and Center for Cancer Research under NCI Contract NO1-CO-12400. (2015). gmodels: Various R Programming Tools for Model Fitting. R package version 2.16.2. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=gmodels>
³John Fox (2010). polycor: Polychoric and Polyserial Correlations. R package version 0.7-8. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=polycor>