

Focus Groups in the Design of Prostate Cancer Screening Information for Hispanic Farmworkers and African American Men

Cathy D. Meade, PhD, RN, FAAN, Arlene Calvo, MPH, CHES,
Marlene A. Rivera, RN, MA, and Roberta D. Baer, PhD

Purpose/Objectives: To gain a better understanding of men's everyday concerns as part of formative research for creating relevant prostate cancer screening education; to describe methods and processes used to conduct community-based focus groups.

Setting: Community-based settings in catchment areas surrounding Tampa, FL.

Sample: 8 community-based focus groups: a total of 71 Hispanic farmworkers and African American men.

Methods: Focus group discussions were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for identification of emergent themes.

Main Research Variables: General life and health priorities, prostate cancer knowledge, screening attitudes, cancer beliefs, and learning preferences.

Findings: Major themes among African American men were importance of work, family, and faith. Major themes among Hispanic farmworkers were importance of family, employment, education of children, and faith. A common issue that surfaced among most men was that a cancer diagnosis was considered to be a death sentence. Preferred learning methods included use of cancer survivors as spokespeople, interactive group education, and the provision of easy-to-understand information. Issues of trust, respect, and community involvement were key to the successful conduct of focus groups among ethnically diverse groups.

Conclusions: Study findings have important implications for the content of information developed for prostate cancer education materials and media.

Implications for Nursing: Insights gained from focus group methodology can help nurses and other healthcare professionals design and develop appropriate prostate cancer education tools for use in community-based prostate cancer screening programs.

Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death among men. African American men tend to present with more advanced tumors than their Anglo American counterparts, and African Americans and Hispanics have the lowest five-year survival rates among patients with distant-stage disease (Abdalla, Ray, Vaida, & Vijayakumar, 1999; American Cancer Society [ACS], 2003; Cookson, 2001; Hoffman et al., 2001; Powell, 1997; Tarman et al., 2000; Wingo, Ries, Rosenberg, Miller, & Edwards, 1998). Efforts to reduce the ethnic disparity in mortality from prostate cancer should be directed toward lessening the high incidence of later-stage disease at diagnosis through screening (Demark-Wahnefried et al., 1998; Farkas, Schneider, Perrotti, Cummings, & Ward,

Key Points . . .

- ▶ Focus groups can be effective in obtaining information for the development of culturally, linguistically, and literacy-sensitive communications about cancer.
- ▶ Conducting community-based focus groups requires an interdisciplinary research team, extensive planning, and input from community members and a sustained network of community partners.
- ▶ Successful prostate cancer screening education should be based on linking cancer screening to issues that are high in the community members' own schema of priorities.

1998; Gilliland, Hunt, & Key, 1996; Miller & Kolonel, 1996). Educational materials and media delivered in relevant ways in community-based settings can be used to reach priority populations with important prostate cancer screening messages (Guidry, Fagan, & Walker, 1998; Meade, Calvo, & Cuthbertson, 2002; Weinrich, Boyd, Bradford, Mossa, & Weinrich, 1998; Zimmerman, 1997).

A national blueprint for action published by ACS documented the high incidence and mortality of prostate cancer among African American men (ACS, 1998). Recommendations included involving men in research studies, developing effective educational programs about prostate cancer for the

Cathy D. Meade, PhD, RN, FAAN, is a professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Oncology at the University of South Florida in Tampa and director of the Education Program at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute in Tampa; Arlene Calvo, MPH, CHES, is a doctoral candidate in the College of Public Health at the University of South Florida in Tampa and president of the Foundation for the Advance of Clinical and Translational Research in Panama, FL; Marlene A. Rivera, RN, MA, is a coordinator in the Education/Outreach, Cancer Control/Education Program at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute; and Roberta D. Baer, PhD, is a professor of Anthropology at the University of South Florida. This article was funded by the State of Florida Department of Health. (Submitted September 2002. Accepted for publication January 25, 2003.)

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