ENGAGING THE SCIENTIFIC AND LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN CVD RESEARCH AND PREVENTION-THE JACKSON HEART STUDY

Clifton Addison, Brenda Jenkins and Donna Antoine LaVigne

Jackson Heart Study, Jackson State University, 350 W. Woodrow Wilson Drive, Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Abstract: The Jackson Heart Study (JHS) is a large, community-based study of African Americans residing in the tri-county areas of Hinds, Madison and Rankin counties in Mississippi. The JHS utilizes a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach that provides avenues for community residents to become actively involved in the full range of research-related activities and encourages scientists to access collected data for research purposes. This presentation enumerates procedures by the JHS to engage researchers in the study of JHS data and the community in all aspects of study management, as well as health education and health promotion. We outline the procedures that the JHS implemented to support investigators to assess CVD trends among the African American population. We also discuss programs and activities that have been implemented to boost interest and participation by African Americans in this landmark study. Selected JHS CVD descriptors are: BMI = 31.75; Diabetes Status =18.79%; Hypertension Status = 37.1%; Fasting TCL (mg/dl) =199.3. The scientific writing process is managed, reviewed, and approved by the JHS Publications and Presentations Sub-Committee (P&P). Community Partnership/Outreach includes; providing avenues to reduce health disparities; exposing/engaging the community in health disparities discussions; and regular community gatherings. The JHS employs innovative strategies to engage the public and the scientific community to gain an understanding of the risks for development of CVD. These efforts have resulted in acceleration in interest in collaborative approaches to reducing the impact of CVD. The implementation of this type of intervention will lead to health improvement in the long term. Subsequent policy interventions could lead to vital contributions to health achievements because policies can influence population rates of other health risks like physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and obesity. As research on CVD continues to develop, researchers have an opportunity to inform the larger community by increasing dissemination of findings through publication in general public health journals.

Key words: Partnership, outreach, Jackson Heart Study, CBPR, African Americans, manuscript development, CVD

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