RAPID ASSESSMENT (RA) METHODS TO SET THE ENVIRONMENT FOR POLICY DECISIONS ABOUT HIV/AIDS PREVENTION FOR URBAN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

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Abstract: Changing the environment that affects policy decisions about HIV/AIDS prevention emerged in the Baltimore Commission on HIV/AIDS deliberative dialogue as a key to reducing the continued transmission of HIV infection among residents, especially among adolescents, women, and minority male communities in the designated zip code areas. The Baltimore R.A.R.E Project was conducted, using ethnographic (environmental scanning, mapping, intercept interviews, focus groups) and survey methodologies to gain a better understanding of Baltimore City African American young adults’ (ages 18-24 years) (1) knowledge, attitudes and beliefs concerning existing HIV prevention services, (2) environmental and attitudinal barriers to effective HIV prevention activities and (3) areas that should be included for improved youth preventive health service utilization. Findings suggest that there seems to be widespread confusion about what is a prevention service and the importance of HIV screening and testing among young African Americans who reside in “hot spot” areas of the urban center of Maryland State, USA specifically within Baltimore City. Assessing the effects of economic and social action for HIV prevention through ongoing community-based participatory action research and health impact statements using 'Rapid assessment' (RA) methods have proven the real potential to generate important public health information for HIV prevention policy development and implementation in urban higher risk African American communities.

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