Health Equity for Native American Adults with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Developmental Disabilities

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Background

- Adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) experience health inequities, and those who also identify as a member of an ethnic minority group face additional health inequities.
- In the United States, a majority of adults with IDD are supported by family caregivers. Therefore, the caregivers’ health equity is equally as important.
- The purpose of this study was to explore how Native American (NA) adults with IDD and their family caregivers participate in activities focused on their health and wellness in order to address their health equities and/or inequities within their communities.

Methods

- Seven community members with either personal or professional connection to the NA and/or IDD community served as the Community Advisory Board (CAB) overseeing every aspect of this community-engaged research project.
- Photovoice methodology and semi-structured interviews were conducted to fully engage individuals with IDD (N=4) and their self-identified caregiver (N=4).
- Interviews were transcribed verbatim and field notes from meetings were reviewed for analysis.

Results

Results are summarized within the Socio-Ecological Model

Community Level
Special Olympics played a large part in participants’ definition of health and wellness, as well as connections to their community

Family Level
Traditional Foods, Family-Time, Spirituality, Role Model, Pets

Individual Level
Work, Being Active, Hobbies, Healthy Eating

Common themes included preparing traditional foods, spending quality time with family, and being a role model to others

Discussion/Conclusions

- Themes highlight daily occupations which improved the health and wellness of participants.
- The Photovoice method emphasizes equal partnerships between researchers and participants and is an accessible and collaborative research methodology supporting the American Occupational Therapy Association’s ‘Vision 2025.’
- Lessons learned include: logistical challenges of meeting with participants, building in more time for recruitment, the importance of having a community champion, providing incentives throughout, and hosting events at familiar locations.

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