

Health Needs Assessment Essay

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Health assessment can be defined as a care program which involves the identification of special needs of a person or a group of people and the way those needs are addressed by health facilities or the entire health system. Health assessment also involves the evaluation of the health status of an individual(s) through the performance of a physical examination after recording their health history. Health assessments are different from diagnostic tests because the latter is carried out when a person is already exhibiting the signs and/or symptoms of a particular disease (Turnock, 2012).

Measure of Public Health

Measures used in assessing health are different and the first measure of public health is mortality. Mortality is the rate of deaths occurring in a particular population. It has been very common for the numbers and rates of death to be used in measuring public health. Globally, some diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and hypertension among others have been observed to be the leading causes of death. In order for policies to be formulated, mortalities which are specific on particular age groups are considered as they provide more awareness on health status of that age group. The same way, when mortality data is stratified on the basis of ethnicity or race, the health disparities available are quantified (Pennel, McLeroy, Burdine, Matarrita-Cascante & Wang, 2016).

Morbidity is the second measure that is used to measure public health. It can literally be said to mean the rate of incidence of a disease or illness in a specified group of individuals or a population. This rate of morbidity can be estimated through use of the rates of hospitalizations recorded among a group or a population. This kind of measure is easy and advantageous in that it is not difficult to get access to the rates of hospitalizations. Although they are of very good use when carrying out certain analyses, they can be biased indicators of the health status (Turnock, 2012). For example, in cases where there are increasing rates of outpatient treatment when handling conditions which require hospitalization can adversely and substantially affect the usefulness of the information or data recorded for assessing health status.

Measuring disability is another dimension of morbidity that looks into non-fatal health complications. Certain problems such as pain in joints and bones often a result of arthritis can be said to be main contributors of disability. Other chronic conditions such as lung problems, heart disease, stroke, diabetes etcetera are also known to be causers of disability. High rates of disability could be taken to mean that the general health status of the population is at risk of diseases (Giger, 2016). Apart from the mentioned three, the other measures that can be used to assess the health of a group or population can be the functional status and/or the quality of life. Mental, emotional, physical functioning and well-being, energy, pain, general perceptions about health and social functioning are also important aspects used in the assessment of health status. Quality of life as a measure is used to determine health conditions that can lead to significant

pain and suffering but rarely death (Pennel, McLeroy, Burdine, & Matarrita-Cascante, 2015).

Completed Needs Assessment

The first completed assessment selected was titled; “St. Mary’s Community Health Needs Assessment 2016.” The data collected in the needs assessment included; hospitalization, prevalence and statistics regarding the incidences of health indicator conditions and which had the greatest impact on the health of the population in the Northeast Georgia region. The data also collected was concerning birth rates and maternal health, infant mortality, demographic information, chronic diseases, community level cancer data, death rates, discharge rates, risk factors and prevalence of TB, HIV/AIDS and STD’s in addition to other data compiled in the report (Broyard & Hui, 2016).

The second completed assessment which was selected had a title; “Georgia Five Year Needs Assessment”. The assessment was carried out to determine and help to improve the general health of women and the well-being of children as well as families. A thorough examination of the status of health of women and children in Georgia. Data collected regarding the needs assessment for analysis included; health related risk behaviors such use of tobacco and alcohol use and etcetera, chronic health conditions such as obesity and diabetes, the use of preventive services such as screening on breast and cervical cancer, hospital discharges information, family planning programs, HIV/AIDS, maternal mortalities, disabilities and STDs among other types of data (Gilmore, 2011).

Theories Influencing Needs Assessments

The “St. Mary’s Community Health Needs Assessment 2016” was carried out using a comprehensive community development approach. In the assessment, the approaches of community building and community development were used and they intended to put more emphasis on developing the capacity of the community as well as its connections as a way of ensuring better outcomes and results were realized such as health status, safety and housing conditions, employment and economic opportunities. Through the use of this approach, the health interventions were coupled with strategies that contributed to community building and the measures aimed at improving the health status of the public.

Georgia Five Year Needs Assessment used an approach which was policy centered. The aim of the program was to meet the necessity of the “Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant” to the states. The Title V Needs Assessment created avenues for reassessing capacity, identification of new priorities and aligning the infrastructure that was existing to satisfy and meet the needs of the population. The theory used here depicted the use of community participation and which involved awareness creation, changes in health behaviors, health community organization and changes in community processes. This approach attempted to involve the community with the aim of reducing and cutting down disparities in the health of mother and children.

Use of Results in Program Planning and Design

The outcomes obtained from the needs assessments were important in that they were helpful in determining whether or not to delve into a health project. The assessment

results in both case studies were good in that they gave the projects intended to be undertaken some desired impacts. Specific goals were established from the assessment results. The outcomes also advised and identified the required results in particular areas as well as defining the existing disparities of the desired situations. The results were also important in decision making and they acted to provide relevant information which was useful in making health decisions and the implementations of actions become easy (Turnock, 2012).

The most pressing and critical health needs of the community were identified and the actions required undertaken. Finally, the results were important in getting the involved communities engaged in the health activities and that they accepted the works undertaken in the planned programs.

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