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School of Community Health Sciences
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Wellness from Diabetes: Community Health and Diabetes Assessment

Kelly Lorennij

Alexander Hirata, MA, Canvasback Missions

Emily Gifford, MPH, Canvasback Missions

Coordination Center: University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine

ABSTRACT

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is highly prevalent in type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) with a prevalence rate of 37.37%, the highest in the world. T2DM dominates Majuro, the country's capital, as a leading cause of mortality and morbidity, despite efforts of health care workers, local community organizations, and government.

Income and education are social determinants of health. The correlations between good health and high income, and between good health and high education level, are positive. However, there is a continuous growth of T2DM incidence and prevalence on Majuro. Therefore, we hypothesized that there is no significant difference between healthful dietary and exercise practices of two groups of people on Majuro, RMI: those with high income and high education levels, and those with low income and low education levels.

Community-based research conducted on Majuro helped test our hypothesis and gain knowledge of necessary steps to reverse this epidemic. During beginning stages of our research, related literature on diabetes, social determinants of health, and research methods were reviewed. To acquire qualitative data, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted. FGDs were held with people grouped according to profession (health, education, community). With the KIIs, key members deeply involved or active in the community were interviewed one-on-one. The bulk of our quantitative data will be gathered by surveys on basic demographics, economics, and health-related perceptions. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and local organizations, 400 surveys will be administered in Marshallese and English, and collected.

Key words: Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Qualitative Data, Quantitative Data

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