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A culturally congruent education group: An evidence-based approach to improve prenatal care utilization

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Disparities in prenatal care utilization has been found among women of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, including among Pacific Islanders whose prenatal care utilization ranks the lowest among minority groups living in a southwestern county. Findings by both the state and county health departments about the late entry to prenatal care and high rates of infant mortality and preterm births in this population provided solid evidence to support a practice change. The evidence-based intervention consisted of an education group which utilized a culturally congruent approach to improve prenatal care utilization. Cultural congruence consisted of integrating the state health department's findings of the top two preferred teaching methods by Pacific Islanders which were large group settings and church-centeredness, involving resource persons of Pacific Islander heritage and providing food and prize incentives during the educational sessions. The intervention program was conducted in a group setting at a chapel where Pacific Islanders met for religious services. This project utilized a 15-item self-report questionnaire to measure two outcomes: Increased knowledge of prenatal concepts and improved motivation to utilize prenatal care. A pretest and post-test were conducted to measure the knowledge and motivation levels before and after the intervention program. Findings indicated that the education group met the intended outcomes and confirmed certain areas influenced by cultural values. The culturally congruent education group was an effective mode of instruction for the Pacific Islander women and could be utilized in a population-based nursing practice to promote health and mediate healthcare disparities.

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