

Community leaders' perspectives on facilitators and inhibitors of health promotion among the youth in rural South Africa

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Abstract

Introduction: There are a number of factors that influence health promotion activities among the youth. This study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the facilitators and inhibitors of health promotion among the youth from the perspectives of community leaders in a rural setting in South Africa.

Methods: The study adopted an exploratory, descriptive and contextual qualitative approach involving community leaders in rural South Africa. Data saturation occurred after individual interviews with 21 participants. Data analysis employed the principles of content analysis.

Results: We found that facilitators of health promotion were access to education on the benefits of health promotion activities, efforts of organizations and community leaders/teachers, access to health care services and engaging in physical activities, and youth motivation and positive role modelling. The themes that described the inhibitors of health promotion were inadequate recreational and health facilities and health personnel, the impact of stringent religious doctrines, unemployment, social vices and poor parenting.

Conclusion: We concluded that there is the need to implement more engaging activities and opportunities for the youth and parents in rural communities to enhance health promotion.

1. Introduction

The youth is the future of every community and nation and their health issues are of importance to all community leaders, health professionals, educationists, non-governmental organizations, governments and other agencies across the globe. The youth constitute a significant percentage of the world's population. The youth is challenged with a lot of health problems such as substance abuse that lead to social and psychological instabilities (Fergusson, Boden, & Horwood, 2013). There are HIV infections and teenage pregnancies with complications due engagement in premarital unprotected sex and exposure to pornography (Bhuiya et al., 2017; Coetzee et al., 2014). Although there have been attempts to address these problems by several key stake-holders, the youth in many countries including South Africa continue to experience challenges that led some to attempt suicide (Acedański, 2016; Cluver, Orkin, Boyes, & Sherr, 2015; Marginean, 2014). The preventive aspect of the health of the youth is important to prevent life-threatening and chronic diseases (McCleary-Sills,

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