

Research-based abstract

Title

The role of community engagement in a health promoting initiative in a deprived neighborhood in Aalborg

Type of presentation

Oral presentation

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Background

Deprived neighborhoods are characterized by more residents with a lower socioeconomic status and more social and health-related problems compared to other areas. One approach to dealing with this social inequality in health is through health activities in the local area. Community engagement often plays a central part in the activities, but there is a need for more thorough evaluation of the ways in which community engagement affect health. The aim of this study is to gain further insight into how community engagement is being carried out in practice, and how it affects health and well-being. This is done through a case study of a public health intervention initiative in the residential area of Aalborg Øst.

Theoretical frame and methods

This study uses a theory-based evaluation approach to explore what works in an intervention, why and how it works, and which target groups it works for. Data for the evaluation will be gathered using qualitative methods with emphasis on semi-structured interviews with health workers from the intervention in Aalborg Øst, and residents from the area. Furthermore observations and document analysis will supplement the data from the interviews. Theory and concepts in relation to community engagement will be used in the analysis.

Key results and conclusions

Results of the study are not yet available, but preliminary results on how community engagement is being carried out indicate that collaboration with other stakeholders and outreach work can be strategies that facilitate community engagement, and can be used to explore the needs of the residents.

Literature indicates that community engagement might affect health through factors like social capital, social cohesion and empowerment. However, the health effects might not be community-wide, and it can be difficult to engage the most disadvantaged groups, which might influence the impact of the intervention.

Implications for further research, policy or practice

Results from this study will add to our understanding of what works in health promotion initiatives working with community engagement in deprived neighborhoods, which can help to develop these interventions further.

Key references

- 1) O'Mara-Eves, A., Brunton, G., Oliver, S., Kavanagh, J., Jamal, F., & Thomas, J. (2015). The effectiveness of community engagement in public health interventions for disadvantaged groups: a meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health*, *15*, 129.
- 2) Popay, J. (2010). Community Empowerment and Health Improvement: The English Experience. In A. Morgan, M. Davies, & E. Ziglio (Eds.), *Health assets in a global context: theory, methods, action*. New York: Springer.

This abstract can be seen in relation to the abstract of Mads Borgstrøm-Hansen called "*Proaktiv tilgang til rekruttering og samarbejde med foreninger i lokale sundhedsfremmeindsatser*" and the abstract of Louise Lund Holm Thomsen called "*Community engagement in a settings-based health intervention in Aalborg – the success and challenges of engaging with the social diversity of the target-group*"