**DEM Research Showcase Abstract**

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Background

The FOCUS Program is an ED-based HIV and HCV screening and linkage-to-care program for vulnerable populations in King County, with a focus on the immigrants and unhoused people. These populations have a high burden of HIV and HCV and face unique challenges in accessing healthcare services. To alleviate these challenges, we require tailored interventions to improve screening and linkage to care for HIV and HCV and reduce disparities.

Methods

We used a needs assessment approach through online courses and training to identify barriers to screening and healthcare access among immigrants and unhoused people, informing the development of targeted interventions, including collaboration with key stakeholders, and designing culturally appropriate communication materials.

Findings

The needs assessments revealed significant disparities in HIV and HCV screening and linkage to care among immigrants and unhoused people in King County due to various causes such as lack of information, some policy restrictions, fear of retaliation, poverty, low literacy, stigma, cultural beliefs, and linguistic barriers. There is a disparity in new HIV diagnoses within race and ethnicity. Furthermore, it showed disparity among King County residents with a high HIV diagnosis in central Seattle and south of King County compared to other areas.

Discussion

The findings of this project highlight the critical importance of tailored interventions to address healthcare disparities among vulnerable populations. This focuses on a comprehensive approach combining community outreach, policy advocacy, and culturally competent communication strategies. Community outreach involves community leaders (peer educators) to enhance engagement and participation among target populations and to help co-create cultural communication materials and facilitate their dissemination to increase awareness of available healthcare services and improve access to outreach screening and care. Furthermore, policy recommendations aim to address systemic barriers to healthcare access and promote equity in service delivery. This will apply to advocating for the policy change on HIV screening for newcomer immigrants, creating transparency policies to bridge the literacy gap, and offering equitable services to all King County residents. Then, ensure sufficient funding to support the creation of culturally appropriate materials to meet the needs of different communities. With all these efforts, the FOCUS program would significantly improve HIV and HCV screening and linkage to care in King County. Collaborating with community partners and policymakers will be essential to sustain and expand these efforts because, although extraordinary intervention, the intervention will fail without support at the policy level and community.