

Community Assessment

It is the process by which data are compiled regarding a community's health status and resources and from which nursing diagnoses are derived.

Population or Community health assessment can be approached from two perspectives:

1. A need assessment approach: focuses on community health problems.
2. A population assessment approach: on the other hand, provides an overall picture of community health status, including community strengths and assets as well as needs and needs or problems.

Functions community health assessment :

1. Identifying problems.
2. Risk factors.
3. Needs as perceived by its members.
4. Determining its interests and priorities related to health.
5. Describing population lifestyles.
6. Delineating community strengths and resources.
7. Facilitates decision making, particularly with respect to resources allocation.
8. Provide skill training for residents.
9. Facilitates group mobilization.
10. Enables consciousness raising.

-Principles of Community Health Assessment:

1. Multiple sources of information should be sought to provide an overall picture of community health rather than the view of one segment of the population.

2. Assessment should address the needs of specific subgroups within the population (e.g, vulnerable populations such as the elderly or members of diverse cultural groups).
3. Assessment should consider all potential stakeholders in the population. Stakeholders are those concerned with the outcome of the assessment (e.g., community residents, officials, health care providers, funders).
4. Assessment should identify population assets as well as needs and problems.
5. Assessment should be conducted or directed by persons with experience in population health assessment.

Data Sources for Population Health Assessment:

Assessment data may be either quantitative or qualitative.

1. Quantitative data reflect numbers of people, characteristics, or events within the population. (number of people in specific age or ethnic groups and rates of specific diseases and causes of death within the population).
2. Qualitative data focus on perceptions of health, attitudes, and health concerns as voiced by members of the population (community members' identification of adolescent pregnancy, substance abuse).

- Types of Community Needs Assessment :

Assessment for nurses means collecting and evaluating information about a community's health status to discover existing or potential needs and assets as a basis for planning future action. Assessment involves two major activities. The first is collecting of pertinent data, and the second is analysis and interpretation of data.

1. Community needs assessment I:

This type of needs assessment seeks to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses within a community and create or improve services based on the identified weaknesses.

2. Community needs assessment II:

This type of needs assessment is constructed around a known problem or potential problem facing the community for example, disaster preparedness, how to address an increase in violent crime etc.

3. Community needs assessment III:

This final type of needs assessment is based within an organization which either serves the community at large, is currently addressing a need within the community, or is dedicated to an under-served population within the community.

Type of Community Health Assessment:

1. Familiarization or Windshield Survey:

It involves studying data already available on a community, then gathering a certain amount of firsthand data in order to gain a working knowledge of the community.

Nurses drive (or walk) around the community of interest; find health, social, and governmental services; obtain literature.

2. Problem - Oriented Assessment:

It begins with a single and assesses the community in terms of that problem.

3. Community Subsystem Assessment:

In community subsystem assessment, the CHN focuses on a single dimension of community life (e.g., the nurse might decide to survey churches and religious organizations to discover their roles in the community).

4. Comprehensive Assessment:

It seeks to discover all relevant community health information. It begins with a review of existing studies and all the data presently available on the community.

A survey compiles all the demographic information on the population, such as its size, density, and composition.

- Methods Community Assessment :

1.Surveys

A survey is an assessment method in which a series of questions is used to collect data for analysis of specific group or area.

To plan and conduct community health surveys, the goal should be to determine the variables (selected environmental, socio-economic, and behavioral conditions or needs) that affect a community ability to control disease and promote wellness.

2.Descriptive Epidemiologic Studies:

It examines the amount and distribution of a disease or health condition in a population by person(Who is affected?),

by place (Where does the condition occur?),

by time (When do the cases occur?).

They are useful for suggesting which individuals are at greatest risk and where and when the condition might occur. They are useful for health planning purposes.

3.Community Forums or Town Hall Meetings:

It is a qualitative assessment method designed to obtain community opinions.

4.Focus Group:

It is similar to the community forum or town hall meeting in that it is designed to obtain grassroots opinion.

- Sources of Community Data:

Data sources can be

1. Primary sources: Community members, including formal leaders, informal

leaders, and community members, can frequently offer the most accurate insights and comprehensive information.

2. Secondary sources:

People who know the community well and the records; examples are health team members, client records, community health (vital) statistics, census bureau data, reference books, research reports, and community health nurses.

3. International Sources:

World Health Organization (WHO) and its six regional offices and health organizations.

4. National Sources :

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