COVID 19 Risk in Black Hawk County Iowa

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Community Health Nursing Diagnosis: Social Isolation of the COVID-19 suspects and patients: Increased risk of infection among the population of Black Hawk County of Iowa related to lack of social distancing due to the current pandemic, as demonstrated by an increased number of patients and casualties. Among many possible solutions, social media might be an effective way to increase awareness about diseases and their causes and symptoms. The use of social media might be especially effective for many economically disadvantaged segments of Black Hawk County of Iowa. It has been observed during the field and online research that the government and private sectors have initiated a plethora of online activities. However, there is still room for accelerating the social media campaign because not all the people observed during the study were aware of the complexities of COVID-19, its causes, and its effects. It is expected that as the authorities and private sector increase interactive activities like quizzes, tests, riddles, and other programs, many people might spend more time on their cell phones and computers instead of meeting others physically. Thus, the effective use of social media, as recommended in the next sections of this write-up, might go a long way in reducing the number of possible infections from coronavirus in Black Hawk County of Iowa.

(B1) Health Inequity/Disparity

As with other states and counties in the country, *Black Hawk County* has economic and health disparities. According to experts, “health disparity” refers to “a lack of equality and similarity, especially in a way that is not fair” (Carter-Pokras & Baquet, 2002). Before presenting the data collected, it seems appropriate to take a bird’s eye view of the universal problem. Worldwide, almost a billion people have no access to basic medical care. More than 15 million people die each year from curable diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria, and tuberculosis, around five million of them from lack of access to clean drinking water. Almost without exception, this affects people with low incomes in developing countries. Similar problems also exist in the Black Hawk County area under observation. During the data collection exercise, it was observed that many society segments were indeed poor, with little knowledge of the causes, impacts, and precautions of COVID-19. It was also observed that those who have resources were better cognizant of this deadly disease.

On the contrary, in the country’s relatively poor areas, many people were not following the SOPs for social distancing. People above sixty years of age and teenagers were especially seen not complying with maintaining a distance of six feet. I felt that community nursing might be very helpful for them in giving guidance about infectious diseases. Such ailments as malaria, diarrhoea, and particularly

COVID-19 have characteristics in transmission, course, and treatment that make the poor particularly at risk. I have realized through this exercise that poverty and illness are often mutually reinforcing. Households with low incomes, for example, tend to have to forego quality education, especially for their children, when they fall ill. As a possible consequence, poverty is "passed on" to the next generation. Health is also an important factor for the productivity of a household and, thus, for its economic development. The field exercise reinforced my belief that income and health are interdependent in many cases. Trying to break this "vicious circle" is of central importance to health care and prevention. The government should collaborate with the private sector to improve health awareness and provide medical services that would benefit even after COVID-19.

The field study provided some interesting information about the health services in the area. Amongst the various segments, the education level of the Black population was on the lower side. The next on the list were people of Asian origin. Interestingly, these two segments were also economically disadvantageous, proving that financial resources and educational achievements are somewhat related. Approximately thirty per cent of Black people have not completed high school, and most of them were not aware of the health services provided at the Federal, state, and county levels. Therefore, a small fraction of such people were not covered by health insurance. Hispanics were better educated, and almost all of them were covered by health insurance. They were observing social distancing in a better way than others. The survey revealed that poverty is related to unhealthy habits. According to experts, the following are the four determinants of economic instability (Social Determinants of Health, 2014):

1. Unemployment
2. Food Insecurity
3. Housing Instability
4. Poverty

The same was established in the field research. Unfortunately, the economically poor segments were not taking the coronavirus seriously. Informal interviews with some Black people revealed that they were in the habit of drinking. The highly educated White people were aware of alcohol's dangers; therefore, they were not drinking regularly. Experts also recommend avoiding wine due to its side effects, especially on the liver (Thomas, 2020). It was also established that social media's use might prove effective in promoting health consciousness amongst all segments. It is also important to mention that a strong immune system might play an effective role in the war against COVID-19.

Lastly, it is important to present some data about the incidence of COVID-19 in the area. The details are pictorially represented in Figure 1 (Black Hawk County, Iowa COVID-19 Response, 2020).

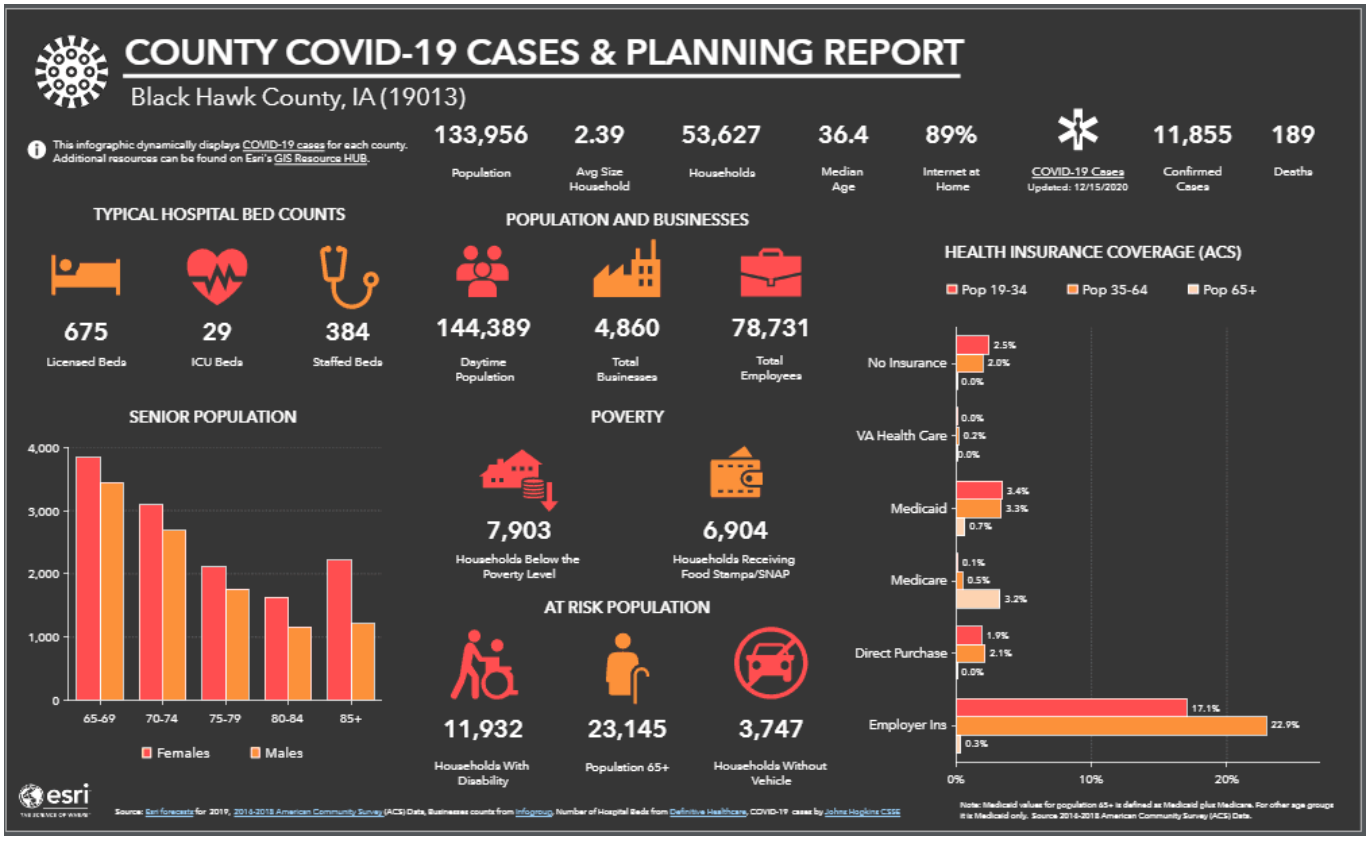


Figure 1 – COVID-19 Response (Black Hawk County, Iowa COVID-19 Response, 2020).

(B1a) Primary Community and Prevention Resources

The present and past governments of Black Hawk County, Iowa, have been allocating resources for the residents' health, as evidenced by the county's public sector medical infrastructure. Apart from this, a considerable number of private-sector clinics and hospitals were also there. On the doors of clinics and hospitals, health professionals have placed messages about social distancing and the usage of masks and sanitisers. I visited over a dozen clinics and hospitals in the county, and the staff was observing coronavirus-related SOPs. However, it was unfortunate to report that many patients and their attendants were not observing social distancing and the usage of masks and sanitisers. This might be one reason why there has been a surge in COVID-19 cases in the county in recent days. According to the official data, there are 675 beds available in hospitals in the county. Moreover, there are 29 emergency beds (Black Hawk County, Iowa COVID-19 Response, 2020). With limited time and resources, I could not visit all the hospitals; however, I found that some hospitals are working to their full capacity, which denotes the situation's gravity.

As far as prevention efforts are concerned, the public and private entities have initiated many awareness programs online and offline. The state government has launched dedicated social media pages to upload prevention-related content. The general public is also spreading awareness about the

pandemic; however, I noticed that many rumours and unsupported stories are also spread on social media, which is not conducive to the county and state population's health and wellness.

(B1b) Underlying Causes

I have selected COVID-19 because it is currently one of the most important health concerns not only for the county and the state but also for the whole world. I think that the major cause of the relatively high rate of coronavirus infection in the county is a non-observance of COVID-19 SOPs by the public in the county. When the pandemic started, there were reports that the doctors and the medical staff lacked personal protective equipment (PPE); however, lately, the government supplied the required materials. For this purpose, they have imported a considerable quantity from China and other nations. I noticed a fall in infection rate after the initial rise; however, the situation has recently gotten worse once again. As I have noticed in the visits, many underprivileged people were not fully cognizant of this deadly disease's dangers.

(B2) Evidence-Based Practice

The government has established an "Immunization and Infectious Diseases Workgroup (IID)" to achieve national health objectives. I think that IID's recommendations might be considerably helpful in the prevention of COVID-19 since it is also an infectious disease. According to this workgroup, many of such ailments are "vaccine-preventable" (Healthy People 2030, 2020). The best preventive approach would be using the coronavirus vaccine, which would be publicly available in the USA very soon. However, until that time, the evidence and research might be helpful, suggesting that social distancing might prevent this pandemic. According to research, infectious droplets do not travel more than six feet (McIntosh, Hirsch, & Bloom, 2020). In light of historical evidence, "individuals should avoid crowds and close contact with ill individuals" (McIntosh, Hirsch, & Bloom, 2020). Mass awareness might be an effective tool to prevent the spread of this pandemic.

(B2a) Identification of Data.

The fieldwork findings are similar to the data already available in the media and scholarly circles. The total population of Black Hawk County, Iowa, is 133,956 (Black Hawk County, Iowa COVID-19 Response, 2020). As the case at the national level, the Black community is economically suppressed in the areas visited. Their educational attainment is lower than other segments of society, and they were found frequently violating the COVID-19 SOPs. The field trip revealed that in recent weeks, coronavirus infection cases have been on the rise. The detailed data is given in Figure 1.

(C1) Social Media Campaign Objective

The proposed social media campaign would increase mass awareness by twenty per cent about the COVID-19 precautions amongst the economically disadvantaged population of Black Hawk County, Iowa. This goal would be achieved in one month. This objective is immensely important to reduce the rate of the county's deadly disease. Moreover, it is expected that the spillover impacts of the social media campaign would be positive for other segments of society as people tend to share the content they like and find advantageous.

(C2) Social Marketing Interventions

In the first social media intervention, economically disadvantageous segments of Black Hawk County, Iowa, would be targeted through social media about the importance of precautionary measures to remain safe from COVID-19. This type of intervention is important because they say, "prevention is better than cure." As mentioned in the preceding sections, certain portions of the society in Black Hawk County, Iowa, are not properly following recommended procedures, including social distancing and mask covering.

In the second social media intervention, the county's poor segments would be targeted through social media about the dangers of COVID-19. This type of intervention is significant because when the masses are aware of an ailment's dangers, they might be more conscious of avoiding it.

(C3) Description of Social Media Platform

The following platforms will be used:

1. Facebook
2. Twitter
3. YouTube
4. Blogs
5. Snapchat
6. Instagram

The use of a multichannel platform would result in wider access and reach. Some people prefer audio, video, and images. Cost consideration is important, and it varies from platform to platform.

(C3a) Benefits of Social Media Platforms

1. Facebook: Facebook is very popular amongst youngsters, and it might help spread preventive

messages.
2. Twitter: The people who use short messages prefer this platform.
3. YouTube: It would be used because the majority of people prefer to view videos.
4. Blogs: This would be used because blogs offer a wide range of text and images, which might help spread preventive messages.
5. Snapchat: With time, it has lost its popularity, but some people still use it.
6. Instagram: People who use images and pictures prefer to use this platform.

(C4) Benefit to Target Population

To achieve the target of increasing awareness about COVID-19 by twenty per cent, comprehensive social media has been devised. Interesting and captivating social media content would be created with the help of qualified health professionals. The target population would have many benefits in the following ways:

1. The targeted segments would receive preventive tips in a timely manner.
2. The popularity of mobiles would also benefit the target population as all the planned platforms are accessible through cell phones.
3. It is expected that the creation and dissemination of quality content will play a role in the wider spread of content.

(D) Best Practices for Social Media

COVID-19 is indeed a serious emergency; therefore, international best practices should be observed. The following points would be taken care of:

1. Demographics of audiences
2. Language preferences
3. Educational level
4. The authenticity of the content
5. Selection of platforms
6. Timing of communication
7. Interactive communication
8. Creative content
9. Respectful content
10. Appropriate language
11. Right tone
12. Discrimination free
13. Responsive communication
14. No over posting

15. Use of images
16. Use of videos
17. Appropriate tools
18. Measuring results
19. Modifications in strategy, if required

(E1) Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

In the planned social media campaign, creators and users are the two main stakeholders. It is the creators of the content's responsibility to abide by national and local laws and create content that follows social and ethical values. From the community's perspective, they are a major contributor to the social cause of preventing the spread of COVID-19. The second important stakeholders are the ultimate users of the content. It is the responsibility of the users to follow the precautionary measures mentioned in the shared content. Apart from this, they might serve society by forwarding messages to others.

(E2) Potential Public and Private Partnerships

The public and private sector organizations might be indeed helpful in the social media campaign. The county's local government might provide accurate information about the population and vulnerable segments. The private sector entities might be helpful in the creation and dissemination of content.

(E3) Timeline

In the first week, a social media account will be created, and some basic planning about content development will be done. In the second week, content would be developed and spread through various platforms. It would take another four weeks before the evaluation might be made about the impact of the campaign.

(E4) Evaluation

The evaluation will be done through two short surveys conducted through Survey Monkey, an easily available tool. If the proposed campaign increases the target segment's awareness level by 20 per cent, the campaign might be declared successful. In the case of negative variance, the strategy might be revisited.

(E5) Cost of Implementing the Campaign

It is estimated that fifteen thousand dollars might be needed to complete the campaign.

(F) Reflection on Social Media Marketing

The community health nurse can use social media to promote awareness about promoting preventive measures for COVID-19. The general public might be safe from the pandemic, and in this way, community health would improve. The resources saved might be used to establish hospitals in the county, bringing job opportunities for nurses.

(F1) Reflection on Future Nursing Practice

In my career as a community nurse, I can use social media to create awareness about the latest research on health and wellness. Generally, people do not prefer to read lengthy research papers, so I would read them and share usable information in easy-to-understand language with the masses. In this way, I would play a positive role in community wellbeing.

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