Acceptability of a modular, community-informed disaster risk reduction training programme in Delmas, Haiti

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Abstract

Background Haiti experienced an Earthquake that killed 230 000 and injured 300 000 people. National disaster plans were developed; however, little is known about how to translate national policies to the community. The aim of this study was to examine the acceptability of a modular Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) curriculum implemented with community leaders.

Methods In 2012, a disaster preparedness community assessment (N=144 households) and key informant interviews were held. In 2013, DRR activities were piloted and outcomes informed curriculum development, which consisted of three content domains: definition of hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities; identification of protective factors and community assets; and development of community engagement strategies to assess, mitigate, and manage environmental threats. Participants were identified during the pilot study as those interested in taking a leadership role. A pre-test and post-test research design was used to assess knowledge acquisition, and questionnaires were administered to determine acceptability of methods.

Findings Participants (n=16) showed improved ability in defining disaster terms: hazards (pre-test 0; post-test 11; 68% improvement), disaster (2; 10; 50%), vulnerability (7; 14; 44%), and risk (8; 12; 25%). 81.25% of participants correctly identified community assets; 100% proposed strategies for engaging others in DRR activities. Participants found the training acceptable and beneficial: 93.75% enjoyed training activities; 100% found the topics relevant and useful; and 81.25% felt comfortable sharing activities with others.

Interpretation Community-based activities are acceptable methods for developing local capacity to mitigate risk to future hazards and disasters. A modular format supports the ability of the curriculum to be adapted and applied in other communities in Haiti.

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Contributors JL provided the concept for study design and wrote the Abstract. AB provided statistical interpretation and wrote the Abstract. AD provided statistical analysis, developed the method, and wrote the Abstract.

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