

INTRODUCTION

Reach Out and Read is a primary care clinic-based program that promotes early childhood literacy through providing books and advice within pediatric well-child visits. Prior studies show that parents who participate in the program read aloud to their children more often, own more children's books, and enjoy reading together as a family more than families who do not participate. In addition, children participating in Reach Out and Read were found to have higher vocabulary scores and higher expressive and receptive language scores than their peers. These skills are crucial for children's social, cognitive, and emotional development. Despite evidence supporting Reach Out and Read, remarkable, and

METHODS

This study involved a qualitative descriptive evaluation of the effects of Reach Out and Read on clinic attitudes, values, and knowledge relating to early childhood literacy. Key informant semistructured interviews were the primary research methodology. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin classified this study as exempt.

Study Population

Two different clinic groups were used in this study: (1) a study group consisting of a descriptive

by the same interviewers. See Appendices A and B at www.wmjonline.org for interview questions.

Data Analysis

With appropriate permissions and informed consent, phone interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analyzed according to qualitative methods following the protocol of Taylor-Powell and Renner. Transcripts were openly coded by 1 coder, and core themes were developed based on the interview questions and emergent patterns from the transcript codes. Major codes were developed based on content repetition and word frequency. Further analysis looked specifically at how employees at the study clinics perceived the program affects their clinic.

RESULTS

Of the 26 clinics with Reach Out and Read that were contacted initially, 10 participated in phone interviews. Of the 25 clinics contacted in the control group, 7 participated in interviews: 5 via phone and 2 via email (per physician request based on scheduling constraints). Table 1 shows a comparison of the study and control group demographics.

Clinics involved in Reach Out and Read that were not stud

ity bias. Although the clinics were explicitly informed that everything stated in the interview would remain confidential, there may have been reluctance to give negative feedback, especially given the involvement of the medical director of Reach Out and Read Wisconsin, although he only saw anonymized transcripts. In addition, as many of the clinics interviewed are affiliated with UW Health, results may be biased towards a more positive experience as this organization provides full funding for Reach Out and Read.

Since this was a self-report study, it is possible the key informants did not provide entirely accurate descriptions of their program use. Selection bias was introduced by the research team in the creation of strict exclusion/inclusion requirements for the study. In addition, due to study limitations, only 1 coder analyzed the interview transcripts.

CONCLUSION

Despite the small sample size and limitations, there are many implications for clinics and systems considering Reach Out and Read. First and foremost, these data provide support for current Reach Out and Read programs and can help sustain funding for this valuable community program. In addition, based on this study, clinics considering implementing Reach Out and Read can understand some of the positive changes seen in other clinics after program implementation. This research also may encourage more clinics to apply for Reach Out and Read because it shows the program's many advantages and very few disadvantages. Finally, large clinic systems that support early childhood literacy promotion may consider offering full-system financial support for Reach Out and Read, knowing that funding is the main barrier to execution in many clinics. They also may consider investing in the program, knowing the benefits of improving employee morale and engaging around the mission to improve child health.

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Conflict of Interest: Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MSLIS, MD, is the medical director of Reach Out and Read Wisconsin and is on the Medical Leadership Committee and Board of Directors of Reach Out and Read National Center.

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