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African American Adolescent Males' Views on Doctors and the Health Care System

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Objective

African American adolescent males have disproportionately high rates of morbidity and mortality and low levels of primary care use. To optimize health care for this group, there is a need to understand their views on doctors and health care, reasons for foregone care, and preferences regarding provision of health care.

Methods

This was a pilot survey of African American adolescent males attending community groups in Chicago.

Results

A majority of respondents agreed with declarative statements about doctors being considerate, truthful, and respectful (63%, 80%, and 80%, respectively). A majority also indicated that the health care system informs them of ways to stay healthy (65%), but fewer agreed that it meets the needs of adolescents and minorities (44% and 33%, respectively). Race/gender concordance with physicians did not seem to be a high priority. Significant reasons for foregone care included conflict with school hours, parents not having time, and lack of transportation. Despite access issues, only a minority of participants wanted health care services co-located with other aspects of their daily lives (school, community centers, church, and barbershops).

Conclusion

African American adolescent males may view doctors and the health care system positively. Eliminating barriers to care and ensuring positive interactions may create opportunities to improve health issues afflicting these at-risk adolescents.

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Keywords

African Americans; children/adolescents; men's health; health care

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