

WAWAC Community Outreach about Health Benefits of Nutritional
Services for Older Adults

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Introduction

On June 21, 2022, the University of Washington Bothell Bachelor of Nursing students partnered with the Washington West African center (WAWAC) to conduct a community health project. WAWAC is located in Lynnwood, Washington. It is a suburban and upper-class neighborhood located on a busy highway; the surrounding environment has green trees on both sides of the highway. The center was established by Pa Ousman Joof in 2018. Pa Ousman is the founder as well as the general manager for the center. WAWAC's mission is to connect West Africans in Washington with local resources, bridge the gap between the larger community and the U.S., and culturally socialize West African immigrants in a value-driven manner. An important part of the center's mission is to provide a platform for West Africans to realize their full potential by utilizing the latest technological advancements and works of art to facilitate communication. The center provides various services to the community, especially the children, youths, and grandmas. The grandmas are older women ages 50 and above who migrated from West Africa mostly from The Gambia to join their children in the United States. Most of the grandmas stayed home and took care of their grandchildren for free. Some services include after-school programs, food drives, summer camps, multimedia education, grandma re-education, traditional marriage counseling, funeral services, and homeless assistance. However, most community members are hesitant to receiving services from the center. Because the services provided are wide, our goal for this community project is to focus on the health benefit of the nutritional services provided for the grandmas. Therefore, these public health interventions aim to create awareness and education about the nutritional health benefits to the grandmas in the WAWAC community. This executive summary will discuss the problems relating to the risk of nutritional deficiency among grandmas and their difficulty accessing the center, the method used during our assessment and our findings, and recommendations for future collaboration.

Problem description

Nutritional deficiency in the older adult population is a problem. The elderly is more susceptible to different health issues. The risk of developing chronic conditions like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease increases as we age. Older adults tend to have a higher prevalence of diseases like osteoporosis and arthritis correlated with bone mass and muscle changes. According to the Center for Disease Control (2022), adults who eat a healthy diet have increased longevity with lower risk of having chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cancers and heart diseases. The grandmas are immigrants from West Africa. According to WAWAC, 2022, most of the grandmas' families are not supportive of the grandmas receiving nutritional supplement provided by the center. Moreover, transportation problems, as well as scheduling, make it difficult to access the center. Despite all the challenges the grandmas and Pa faced, they are willing to work to provide the best for the community. Grandmas faced challenges from their families in getting food from the center. The family members refused the grandmas from coming to the center because they claimed their parents were not poor. Also, inadequate human resource has been a challenge for the center but their willingness to continue to provide services to the community has been exceptional. According to Pa, the challenges he faced could have forced him to quit but helping the community and providing services to them give him a sense of responsibility and inner satisfaction.

Process or Methods used to achieve your purpose.

Our instructor assigned us to this facility after receiving an invitation from Pa Ousman via the University of Washington Bothell. On our first visit, on June 21, 2022, we discussed various problems surrounding the center's goals in collaboration with WAWAC to find a solution. We began with the need assessment survey to find a solution for the problem, followed by the flyers and recommendations. During the need assessment survey, we did a community walk assessing the community, taking notes and pictures of the surrounding for several hours. We created a PowerPoint from the information we gathered and submitted it to our instructor for a presentation to the owner. After identifying the problems, we created flyers with lists of the services provided at WAWAC. These flyers were distributed to the community to create awareness. It allows the community to learn about the services provided at WAWAC. We give recommendations to the owner about things needed to grow. The work is equally divided among all the members, and we all do our part. Each member represents a part.

Key Findings or Results

Most of our findings are driven from observation, from interviews with Pa Ousman and some of the members. According to Nies et al., (2015), the main concern of community health nurses is improving the health of the community members. However, as nurses we can only improve the community if we know the needs of the community. Therefore, through interview and observation, we found out that there are about 100 members and out of those members, only 1% are educated. Economically, most of them have no source of income. According to some of the members, the nutritional supplement provided by WAWAC is a free food that helps them and their families immensely. They continue to highlight that the social gathering they engaged in, helps prevent social isolation among members. According to Pa, the social gathering promotes social connection and mental wellbeing for grandmas. The group is socially and religiously influenced, which encourages most grandmas to be active members of this community. We did a library research to find articles about the health status of older women from West Africa. However, Data regarding the health of West African women are minimal. The article we found discussed how obesity impact inflammation and insulin resistance among African Americans compared to West African. According to Doumatey et al., (2010), Obesity is more prevalence among African Americans compared to West African because, African American tend to be more obese or heavy compared to West Africans. This research shows there is a link between of obesity and inflammatory related illness with both the West Africans and the African Americans (Doumatey et al., 2010).

Recommendations

WAWAC is doing a great job for the community but as always, there is always room for improvement. Therefore, based on our community assessment and engaging with the WAWAC community, we came with recommendation separate recommendation for the grandmas and for the center.

WAWAC

- **Relocation to a safer place: Safety is always a concern for the center. The center is located on the second floor. These stairs make it difficult for people especially those with disability, arthritis and knee problems to access the center. In addition, the location of the center is on a busy highway and the risk of accidents is high.**
- Continue partnership with University of Washington: More student engagement from the university will create more exposure and facilitate more support from the incoming students. For example, future nursing students can complete a need assessment survey for WAWAC which can be used to access more funding for the center to continue to promote nutritional health for grandmas.

Grandmas

- Provide re-education to grandmas' family members about the misconception with regards to the center.
- Provide awareness about the benefit of the nutritional dietary supplements for the grandmas.
- Educate the families about the negative impact of social isolation for the grandmas which can lead to mental break down.

Conclusions

In order to improve the nutritional health of Grandma's receiving WAWAC nutritional meal services, the socio-cultural factors influencing their feeding practices must be considered. Grandma's nutritional status suffers due to a lack of accessible transportation. Therefore, in cooperation with WAWAC, Grandma's family members should arrange for Grandma's transportation. In order to offer the proper nutritional supplements, it is crucial to identify and screen undernourished grandmothers in collaboration with WAWAC and nursing/health students from the University of Washington. The needs assessment stated that a nurse must understand the community's perspective on health status, services it or required, and its concerns (Nies & McEwen, 2015, p.99). Our understanding from this reading allowed us to assess the grandma's nutritional needs and related matters in our paper.

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Acknowledgments

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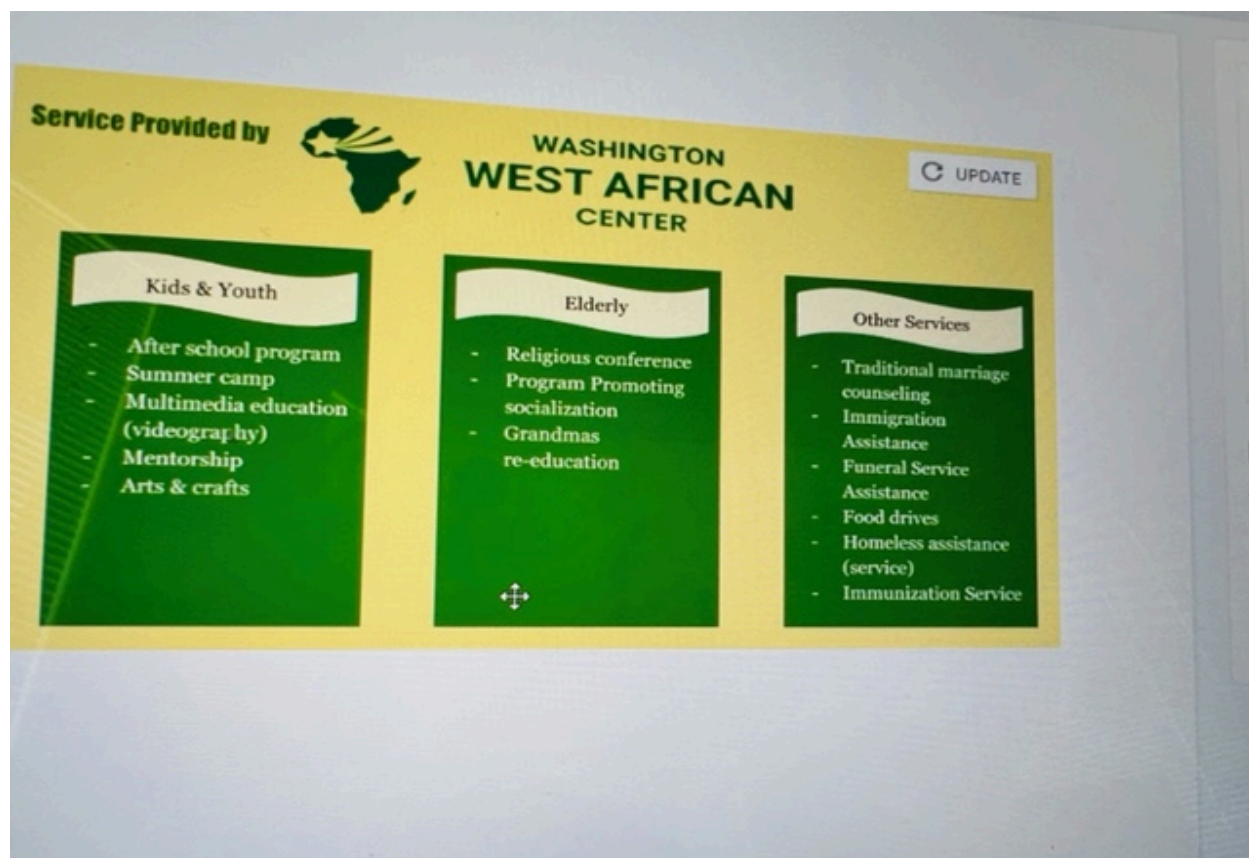
Tables

Table 1
Interview of Grandmas

Type	economical	social	political		
Education	Only 1% of grandmas are educated.	They are being offered to do either western or religious education.	No political affiliation		
Social isolation	Easy access to places without cost. Free transportation services.	The group is socially and religiously influence	No political affiliation		
Nutrition	They do not have to buy the food. Nutritional supplement provided	Nutrition promotes social gatherings. For example, during grandma's monthly meetings and religious gatherings, they provide free prepared meals to participant	No political affiliation		

Note: We interviewed some of the grandmas and the information got are formulated in the table above.

Figure



Note: The above is the flyer with all the services included. This flyer was created and distributed to the community to create awareness to about the services provided.