

A Literature Review of Community Health Volunteers (CHVs): Characteristics, Experiences, and Motivations

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Abstract

Countries around the world are suffering from severe healthcare personnel shortages.¹⁹ In an attempt to alleviate some strain on the healthcare infrastructure and increase access to care, implementation of community health volunteer (CHV) programs has increased substantially.^{19,20} CHVs work within their communities and provide health education, sanitation training, specialty counseling, or referrals when necessary.^{8,9} This literature review explores the characteristics, experiences, and motivations of community health volunteers in order to better understand opportunities for improved sustainability and functionality of these programs. Motivations for fulfilling these positions include: personal recognition, personal development, community service, and monetary/non-monetary incentives.^{10,12,13,20} However, the significant volunteer turn-over and high attrition rates have raised doubt on the sustainability of CHV programs.^{9,24} The reasons for attrition have been explored and narrowed down to the following: insufficient remuneration, lack of quality support, excessive demands of the position, and unmet expectations for development.^{5,7,10,20,25} Taking into consideration CHV desires and reasons for dissatisfaction may enhance the creation of efficient and sustainable programs, which fill sizable vacancies in the healthcare system.