

Rural Community Attitudes and Perceptions on Opioid Overdose and Access to Naloxone

Abstract

Prior to COVID-19, Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and opioid-related overdoses were a major public health concern. Naloxone is an opioid overdose reversal medication that has played a significant role in reducing opioid overdose deaths, however the availability of naloxone within the community has not increased to match overdose rates. This study aims to gain a better understanding of community attitudes towards naloxone access and willingness to use naloxone.

This study utilized a quantitative survey of laypersons within the rural community regarding their perceptions of the current opioid epidemic and their attitudes towards naloxone compared to individuals who identified as working within healthcare. A total of 17 individuals responded to the survey. 12 respondents identified as working in healthcare and 5 respondents identified as working within other fields. The results of Likert scale questions were analyzed using a Whitney Mann analysis. No statistical significance was found between respondents who identified as working in healthcare compared to other fields. Compared to healthcare workers, laypersons were somewhat less open to the idea of naloxone being available in community spaces and were less confident and willing to administer naloxone even with proper training. However, attitudes of laypersons in rural communities was generally positive regarding having naloxone available in local community spaces to be administered by individuals with training in case of an opioid overdose.