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Non-Trainee

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Community Health / Policy

Abstract Title

Food Allergy and Stigma - Engaging and collaborating with individuals and groups who experience stigma in research

Background

Individuals and families living with food allergy, particularly those in lower socio-economic status (SES) groups and those experiencing food insecurity, may experience stigma. While the intersection between food allergy and food insecurity is increasingly being recognized as important, the stigma surrounding these topics can pose challenges in reaching research participants managing the dietary restrictions, inadequate food access, and poverty.

Objective

We sought to examine the literature to learn how to better engage with populations who experience stigma for the dual purposes of learning about their lived experiences and to better inform future research, and learning how to enhance the comfort of these individuals and groups to both collaborate and participate in food allergy research.

Methods

We conducted a narrative review of the literature on conducting research on stigmatized populations and topics. Keywords used in our literature search were “food allergy”, “stigma”, “research”, and “recruitment”. From this review, we identified common themes that could be used to improve our collaboration with individuals with food allergy who experience a particularly high level of stigma.

Results

From our literature review, we found three main themes. Theme 1 was recognizing and validating that the population is stigmatized. Theme 2 was creating partnerships with the stigmatized groups. Theme 3 centered on transparency and establishing trust in the current research project. We also identified additional questions to consider when collaborating on research with stigmatized populations. One additional question for us to consider is how can we create more opportunities throughout the research process to incorporate feedback from stigmatized individuals and groups?

Conclusion

The sensitive nature of conducting research and collaborating on stigmatized topics, like food allergy and food insecurity, requires additional care and establishment of trust in order to engage with the populations that we seek to serve through our research.

Authors

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