**B5.2: Fitting an Asthma Self-Management Program into Rural School System Restrictions**

**Author List:**
**Presenting Author:** Sharon Horner

**Additional Author:**

Presenting Author: Sharon Horner

Address: 1700 Red River Street
Austin, Texas 78701-1499
United States
Ph: 512-471-2847
Fax: 
Email: s.horner@mail.utexas.edu
Institution: University of Texas at Austin

**Presentation Preference:** Session Presentation

**Abstract Categories:**
Research Interest Groups (RIGs): Parent-Child
Thematic Areas: Methods

**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Introduction: In comparison to national numbers, Texas has a higher prevalence of current asthma among school-aged children (8.7% vs. 9.9%, respectively). Texas is largely a rural state: It is one of 7 southern states that have 75% of all rural African Americans and 25% of all rural Hispanics. Rural populations are characterized by greater poverty, jobs that lack health benefits, and fewer health care resources. These resource issues make asthma a major health disparity for rural children. Purpose: To discuss strategies for negotiating access in rural schools and describe adaptations in asthma education program delivery to conform to school system restrictions.

**Method(s):** Methods: Negotiating school access in 4 rural school districts that had different policies and procedures required open communication. Many gatekeepers (School Boards, the Texas Education Agency, school administrators) enact policies that restrict the use of academic time. The program was designed to be flexible in addressing school system needs: The intervention was delivered in 16 sessions of 15-minutes duration over 5.5 weeks. Materials allowed for mastery of new content and skills while incorporating brief reviews to link content with previous session topics.

**Results:** Results: Study participants included a tri-ethnic sample (Hispanic, African American, White) of school-aged children (n=183) who had current asthma. Data were collected at study enrollment (month 1), and post-intervention at months 6, 9, and 12. Children’s asthma knowledge, asthma self-management, skill in using metered dose inhalers, asthma symptom frequency, activity limitations, absenteeism, and quality of life improved over the study year.
Discussion & Conclusions: Conclusion: The adaptations in the program made in response to school system restrictions were not detrimental. In fact, children demonstrated statistical and clinical improvements following the intervention. Flexibility in conducting research in schools was an essential requirement for program success.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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