Introduction

Rural Alaskans face unique challenges in accessibility. Most villages and cities are not connected to road systems, limiting travel between rural and urban areas. This also limits connectivity between small communities. Residents rely heavily on travel. The accessibility of health care and education is limited due to geographical isolation of communities (State of Alaska, 2004).

Methods

A survey was taken by 178 random consenting participants from a variety of Northwestern rural villages and cities over the course of one week. The survey contained questions regarding general knowledge about cancer, attitudes, and beliefs on cancer and its prevention. The survey was created to provide a better understanding of the needs, challenges, and opinions regarding cancer and its prevention in rural Alaska.

Results

Demographics

The 178 participants of the survey came from at least 15 different Northwestern rural Alaskan communities. They ranged from ages 12 to 97. The average age of participants was 36.5, with a median age of 32. The most prevalent age group was 19 years old. Of those, 63.3% of the participants were female, while the remaining 36.7% were males.

Colon Cancer

The most prevalent age reported was 19 years old. Of those, 63.3% of the participants were female, while the remaining 36.7% were males.

Genetic Risk Factors

The survey consisted of questions from selected topics, the initial topic concerning general knowledge about cancer. A tag cloud (Figure 3) was generated from participant answers of what cancer meant to them.

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Beliefs on Cancer and its Prevention in Northwestern Rural Alaska

Jenna Schmidt and Angela Gorn
University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska, 99775

Discussion

The results displayed are only a portion of the data acquired from this study. The information on healthy lifestyle, cancer screening, reasons for not receiving screening, feedback regarding forms of education, and other topics are beneficial in determining community preferences and priorities. Further modifications to the survey can be made with grant writing and provide feedback on successful projects and possible improvements.

Since the survey answers are also linked with demographic data, there is possible further analysis of the information, such as a comparison of towns to villages, or whether gender influences opinions and beliefs on preventative care.

Rural Alaska is unique. The culture is unique, the accessibility is unique, and the healthcare is unique. For example, tobacco prices are shown to be much higher than that of the rest of the United States. This is also true for the cost of fruits and vegetables. This could have possibly influenced the low consumption of fruits and vegetables discussed. This study also demonstrates the necessity to provide culturally tailored education materials. Rural Alaskans face unique challenges in accessibility.

Methods

A study was taken by 178 random consenting participants from a variety of Northwestern rural villages and cities over the course of one week. The survey contained questions regarding general knowledge and information about cancer. Participants were also asked about their beliefs and attitude toward preventive care in four types of cancer:

- Lung Cancer: Smoking and Quitting
- Breast Cancer
- Colon Cancer
- Ovarian Cancer

The data resulting from the surveys was compiled and then used to analyze results. Participants who provided blank and ambiguous answers were excluded.

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