

Analysis of Social Needs and Chronic Conditions of the Uninsured Utilizing a Free Clinic

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Abstract

The number of medically uninsured people in the United States rose from 46 million in 2008 to 50.7 million in 2009. This population cannot access medical care partially due to the decrease in employment-based health insurance and constant increase in health care cost. Free health clinics job is to ensure access to health care by providing care for underserved populations, and ultimately to lower the racial gap health disparities. The purpose of this research is to analyze the demographic characteristics and medical needs of the uninsured through self-diagnosis while using a free clinic. Data were collected from a sample of 2,000 low income, uninsured residents of Champaign County. Secondary data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results indicate that there is a positive association between self-diagnosis and treatment. Measuring the effectiveness of self-diagnosis contributes to the larger body of research by determining if the perceived needs of those utilizing free clinics are being met. If preventative care is improved through self-diagnosis and treatment, this subsequently saves money by reducing emergency room visits.