

Research - R207

Poster

Abstract Title:

Public Awareness of a Statewide Trauma System

Authors:

Timothy Erskine, EMT-P; Ryan Frick, MPH; Kathy Haley, RN, BSN

Background & Purpose:

The federal government and the American College of Surgeons have described public knowledge and awareness of trauma systems as an essential component of those systems. There is a gap in the literature regarding methods to measure and describe public knowledge and perceptions of state trauma systems. This abstract describes one state's low-cost model for surveying the public for trauma system knowledge.

Study/Project Design:

A convenience sample survey was conducted in a novel venue.

Setting:

A survey of the public was conducted at the state fair.

Sample:

This was a convenience sample of 845 adult residents of the state, excluding employees/families of the trauma regulatory agency and the incentive sponsor.

Procedures:

A survey of the public's knowledge and awareness of trauma centers and the state trauma system was created. Lack of funding precluded professional administration of the survey so it was conducted at the state fair. State fair commission studies show fairgoer demographics closely match the Census Bureau demographics of the state as a whole. The survey was placed online and two computer terminals were set up at the fair. These were locked to access only the survey site. Passers-by were solicited to participate. An incentive, the chance to win one of 20 \$25 gift cards, was provided by a state trauma nurse group. Only adult residents of the state were eligible to participate; employees and families of the trauma regulatory agency and the incentive sponsor were ineligible.

Findings/Results:

In the state fair's 12-day run, a total of 839 people completed the survey (886 began, 47 did not finish or were ineligible). More females than males (61% vs. 39%) self-selected to take the survey, as did older people (50% of respondents in 45-54 age group vs. median age in state of 38 years). A slight majority of people (55%) knew injuries are the leading cause of death, but 80% incorrectly identified MVC as the leading cause of injury. 93% feel it is very or extremely important for EMS to bypass non-trauma centers and transport directly to a trauma center. 88% feel it is very or extremely important for all people in the state to live within a 1 hour drive of a trauma center. 80% are willing to pay annually to ensure this happens with 23% willing to pay over \$25 per year.

Discussion/Conclusions/Implications:

A state fair is a valid venue for state trauma systems to survey the public for trauma system perception and awareness. Our method is highly cost effective but self-selection bias is present and reflected in gender and age demographics. Survey data can be analyzed with stratification based on geography, socio-economic status, age and gender. This will be the basis for public information and education plans. Further analysis will be performed to enhance the public component of the trauma system.