

Vulnerable population essay



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Vulnerable Population Paper Introduction The vulnerable population chosen for this paper is Haitian immigrants. Topics of discussion will include description of the population, significant problems related to their vulnerability, related health and social problems, an evaluation of adequacy of current strategies to break the cycle of vulnerability, ethical implications of current strategies, and proposed community and public health nursing interventions in roles of manager, advocate, teacher, caregiver and researcher. Description of the Selected Population Significance of Problems Related to its Vulnerability, Local and National Statistics (if relevant) Related Health and Social Problems For centuries people have migrated to the United States (U. S.) seeking a better way of life and for its promised freedom.

America is considered a melting pot due to its overwhelming abundance of immigrants and their cultures and beliefs. Although the influx of immigrants to the U. S. may cause some challenges and controversies, it keeps the U. S. industrious and innovative. “ In 2006, the number of immigrants in the U. S. hit a total of 37. 5million” (Ohlemacher, 1996-2008).

As of today, there are 419, 317 foreign born Haitians living in the U. S. A majority of the Haitian immigrants migrate to the U. S. leave behind deplorable living and health conditions and political crisis in their native home.

Haitians face unique hurdles in claiming asylum in the U. S. The states with the largest population of foreign born Haitians are New York and Florida. As the influx of immigrants grow yearly, so does the infectious disease rates in the U.

S. Haiti is located in the West Indies and shares its land with the Dominican Republic. Haiti lies 700 miles away from Miami, Fl. Haiti is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with about 600 persons per square mile. The main languages spoken by Haitians are Creole and French. A large majority of Haitians fled to the U.

S. due to the poverty, decades of turbulent political issues and an abundance of other issues that plague Haiti. Haiti is the poorest country in the world with a per capita income of approximately \$530, less than 2 U. S.

dollars a day. As of the year 2007, Haiti's population stood at 9, 000, 000. In this section of the paper these issues will be discussed to provide a better insight of why Haitians migrate to the U. S. Poverty seems the biggest social problem in Haiti that follows many of the immigrants that migrate to the South Florida.

The unemployment rates among the Haitian population is approximately 70%. Many more other concerns and issues plague the island of Haiti such as HIV/AIDS, inadequate sanitation, contaminated water, malnutrition, tuberculosis, illiteracy, and infant and maternal mortality. Less than half of the population is literate accounting for 47% of the population. Life expectancy on the island is about 54 years of age. Infant and maternal mortality rate in Haiti is the highest in the world.

Only 25% of the children get fully vaccinated and malnutrition is one of the most critical problems for the poor and underprivileged. Tuberculosis and typhoid fever are two severe illnesses that are common among Haitians. Haiti is plagued by inadequate sanitation and contaminated water which

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leads to the spread of diseases. It is estimated that 20% to 50% of the Haitians living in the U.

S. are illegal aliens. Most of the illegal aliens who live in South Florida travel to the U. S. on small homemade boats. They risk drowning, interdiction and their life to get to the U.

S. “ Census data from the year 2000 indicated a 117% increase of the Haitian population in the state of Florida, with the highest percent growth in Broward county and Palm Beach” (Migration Information Source, 2008). In the year 2000, there were 182, 224 foreign born Haitians in the state of Florida alone. There were over 190, 000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Haiti in 2005” (HIV Insight, 2008). Haitians accounted for 7% of both Florida’s HIV and AIDS cases reported through December 2003. “ Haitians accounted for a cumulative total of 6, 599 AIDS cases and 2, 105 HIV cases with the major mode of transmission being heterosexual sex” (Palm Beach Post, 2008).

Miami, Fl. Is the city with the second highest HIV/AIDS rate in the U. S. at 49.4%. It’s no wonder that so many Haitians flee the island to get to the United States for a better way of life for themselves and their families. Many immigrants flee the island in hopes of reaching the U. S. and getting assistance from the government for healthcare for themselves and their children.

They hope to raise their children in the “ Land of Opportunity,” where they can get an education, have a normal life and benefit from the abundance of

advantages that the U. S. has to offer. These are hopes that immigrants migrate to the U. S. for themselves and their loved ones.

With these hopes come many cultures, beliefs and diseases into the U. S. Researchers have many different theories on how many different diseases came to America from other countries by way of immigrants. Some hold truth and some are simply theories (a hypothesis, an idea). Haitians believe that illnesses can be of supernatural origins.

They tend to specialize in herbal and holistic remedies as oppose to seeing a physician. That belief combined with high illiteracy rates and poverty leads to higher rates of infection and deaths. Most Haitians speak Creole (a dialect) and the educated speak French. Some Haitians (the uneducated) will indicate agreement (shaking their head up and down or saying yes to higher socioeconomic or healthcare providers) rather than risk disagreement or conflict even when they have no clue what others are talking about.

Personal space is not a big issue and touch (pat on the back, holding hands, kiss on the cheek or hug) is often appreciated by caregivers, family and friends. Written materials are of little use. They are visual learners and prefer to be spoken to. Interpreters outside of family and friends may be mistrusted. Evaluation of Adequacy of Current Strategies to Break the Cycle of Vulnerability, including Ethical Implications of Current Strategies It is more than evident that the U. S.

is confronting a public health concern with the influx of immigrants entering the U. S. Education should top priority. There are limited community based programs and workshops available to Haitian immigrants.

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There are government based programs that aid in healthcare such as WIC, Healthy Start, 4 C's, the county health departments offer vaccinations, healthcare and resources. There are Haitian American programs that aid in reformation (education, job employment and even healthcare) and generous Haitian American foundations that offer money to provide resources and services for the Haitian immigrant populations. One of the problems that impede the Haitian immigrants from benefiting from many of these benefits is that many of them are illiterate and can not read nor fill out the paperwork to receive such benefits. Another major problem that Haitian immigrants have in the U.

S. is the stigma that Haitians were the ones who brought the AIDS into the U. S. and that they are all dirty, poor and uneducated. The ethical treatment of Haitian immigrants in the U.

S. has always been an issue leading to ignorant people to hesitate and even deny Haitians care and services. Despite the stigma and discrimination, Haitians still keep a positive outlook about their culture and the U. S.

Proposed Community and Public Health Nursing Interventions in Roles of Manager, Advocate, Teacher, Caregiver and Researcher Although there are many active programs available to Haitians in the heavily populated Haitian communities, there needs to be more supportive educative programs. There needs to be more programs available throughout the U. S. , in all 50 states not just the states with the highest populations of Haitian immigrants.

“ In 2004, the National Haitian American Health Alliance (NHAHA) launched its major initiative called “ Healthy Haitians 2010,” adapted from “ Healthy

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People 2010” (National Haitian American Health Alliance, 2006). NHAHA’s headquarters is located in New York City and their southeast regional caucus is located in Miami, Fl. The goal of NHAHA is to improve the outlook of health among Haitians by the year 2010 by addressing health disparities and critical health areas in the Haitian community. Through community forums and meetings the top five critical leading health indicators for the community were listed: 1.

Mental health 2. Responsible sexual behavior 3. Cancer 4. Diabetes 5.

Cardiovascular disease Healthy Haitians 2010 was guided by a conceptual framework that outlines a dynamic process through five phases: 1.

Understanding Community Context (ex: assess community assets and

needs) 2. Collaborative Planning (ex: objectives, strategies, action plans) 3.

Developing Leadership and Enhancing participation (ex: recruiting participants and building relationships) 4.

Community action and Interventions (ex: advocacy, implementing interventions) 5. Evaluating Community Initiatives (program evaluation)

These phases are very similar to a nursing care plan. Programs and workshops need to be offered in the native language of creole and French. Programs should be educating them about HIV/AIDS and different diseases that plague them and how they are spread. There also needs to be community based programs that offers resources and a means for treatment and management for the diseases prevalent in the Haitian community.

80% of the Haitian population follow the Catholic religion and 30% are protestant. Community nurses can reach a large majority of the Haitian

population and educate them during or after church based activities such as bible study and prayer meeting. The key to educating the Haitian people is talking to them and providing evidenced based research and statistics. They are very skeptical people and have a fear of the unknown. Handing out flyers and brochures won't do much for them because most of them can not read.

The following are a some examples of services that can provided for Haitian immigrants: 1. Providing free community ESOL classes for Haitian immigrants during after school hours in local schools can provide a means to learn to read, write and speak English. 2. Providing Creole/English/French interpreters at physician offices and the health departments can aid in the understanding of their healthcare. . Providing “ healthcare on wheels” (a mini bus that offers screenings, flu shots and resources) for a few hours each day of three times a week.

4. Assembling community forums in their neighborhoods that they can actively take part in and voice their opinions and feedback will encourage interaction as well provide them with healthcare education 5. Providing and assembling community “ carpool” with those within the neighborhood who have cars to volunteer to take those who don't to physician appointments 6. Providing free or very inexpensive bus passes for those who need transportation to the clinic, physician offices, pharmacy and classes 7. Lobbying to support healthcare reformation for Haitians in America 8. Partnering with neighborhood and major corporations to provide jobs The government and Haitian immigrant population need to come together and strategize a change, a plan that will benefit both.

Conclusion Though Haitian immigrants have come a long way, they still have a long way to go. They face stigmas and ignorance every day and take it in stride. They are not easily oppressed. Haitian immigrants in the U.

S. go through many hurdles from learning a new language to altering old cultures and beliefs. They have both a negative and a positive impact in the U. S. America would not be what it is today, a melting pot, if it weren't for all the immigrants that had an effect on its land.

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