

# Windshield survey for zip code 77004



**ASSIGN  
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Windshield Survey for Zip Code 77004 Eugene Harris NUR/405 Healthy Communities: Theory And Practice November 28th, 2011 Beth Meadows

Community health nursing has become a focal point in healthcare since the 1960s-70s when the civil right movement shifted the goal from a charitable concept to a political commitment in order to rectify racial injustices of the past (Stanhope and Lancaster, 2008). Many programs came about with the goal of addressing inequalities in the delivery of healthcare based upon social-economical status.

Nurse practitioners then became an important factor in the delivery of healthcare, thereby affecting services offered in community health clinics which improved local accessibility to healthcare. (Stanhope and Lancaster, 2008). Many dynamic changes occurred since then with nurses making important contributions in disease prevention and health promotion in the community which countered the escalating costs of acute hospital care. The definition of a community, in simplicity, is a group of people who live in the same area, or the area in which they live.

Unfortunately, this definition does not completely explain what a community is. A community would be individuals who share the same space and interact with each other either directly or indirectly via mechanisms or environment. A community is more than a cluster of individuals, it also will be constructed of families and aggregates (persons with many commonalities) that are interdependent or whose purpose is to fulfill a wide variety of the collective needs (Stanhope and Lancaster, 2008). Stepping back and looking at this description, you could imagine the complexity of interactions which would occur for its survival.

Community health is everything in the process, including characteristics, environment and economics that promote the survival of its constituents. Stanhope and Lancaster (2008) define community health as, “ the meeting of collective needs through the identification of problems and management of behaviors within the community itself and between the community and the larger society” (page 371). Emotional and social aspects of community health are reflected in mental health, crime rates and levels of social function. Community structure is determined by the level of services and resources available to the members. Community health may be improved with the formation of organizations whose goal is to promote the welfare of those who it serves. To go beyond the concept of community/community health and enter the realm of community as a client is very difficult place into practice as a nurse. Communities are more than their sum/aggregates. The focus for nursing is aimed at the improvement of health for the community as a whole rather than groups of individuals.

One could describe community from the systems perspective in which there is a hierarchy (Stanhope and Lancaster, 2008). That being said, changes in one level will impact the others. For nursing, the goal is to create entire community changes with interventions via working with individuals/families. This could be seen in the example of smoking cessation programs which improve individual health and ultimately impact the overall health of the community. The Houston/ Harris county area encompasses an area of 1, 778 square miles with a population of 4. million (" City-Data. com", 2010). Due to its large size and demographics, I have elected to perform my survey based on the zip code in which I live. In this area you could find a variety of obvious

health related issues in addition, to many community support services/institutions. Unfortunately, this area has individuals selling drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages along with environments that promote the perpetuation of these behaviors. The Healthy People 2020 health indicator I have chosen is substance abuse.

According to US Department of Health and Human Services (2011), the goal is to, “ reduce substance abuse to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for all, especially children” (Substance Abuse). This is related to the fact that 22 million Americans deal with alcohol or drug problems (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). My selection also has a lot to do with both the experiences that I have had at our Level One trauma center, Ben Taub General Hospital in addition to the surrounding area in which I live.

The housing for the 77004 zip code varies based on the income levels of those who reside in them. For example, I live in an apartment complex which is well kept yet in the very next block, you could find dilapidated structures. You could drive further down the street and find rows of boxes used as make shift homes for the homeless. Buildings vary from brick, concrete and stucco to wood frames. There are houses inter dispersed amongst the apartments, condos and high rises. A fraction of the buildings are boarded up with a few more in obvious need of upkeep.

The areas that are prominently well kept are either near downtown (also called mid-town) or the medical center/museum district. Most buildings/structures utilize central heating/air condition. There are many

open spaces in area for the 77004 zip code. Many spaces were the result of former houses/buildings which were torn down for development but have been delayed due to economical reasons. These spaces are often utilized by the homeless when there is no fencing to keep them out. A few public parks have also become camp sites for homeless persons.

There are signs of decay in the middle portion of the 77004 zip code which is evident by trash, abandoned buildings/houses, unkempt properties. In some areas you could find rubble filled lots yet if you drive further towards the med center or mid town, you will find many medium sized homes with front yards. Some of these homes have well manicured lawns. The med center area is near the zoo/park and has many older/taller trees. For the most part, the 77004 area is mostly concrete laden. The only divisions between neighborhoods are the structures themselves.

This is readily seen by driving towards mid-town and the museum district. The mid town area has more high rises and apartments/condos. The museum district has more homes with varied age, some look older than others. Several freeways surround this area making it readily accessible from all directions. A mosaic of real estate exists in the middle portion in which commercial and residential buildings could be found side by side as in the case of my apartment. The official names for the neighborhoods in the 77004 area are: mid town, museum district, med center and the University of Houston.

Many areas exist for congregating such as University and college campuses, Hermann park/zoo, shopping center Star Bucks and mid town square during

the day. Unfortunately, there are feelings of territoriality which may cause individual to avoid these areas. At night, there are many bars and restaurants which not only attract locals but other persons from around the Houston area. There are several 24 hour major chain grocery stores/drug stores in this area. Most people travel by automobile due to Houston being a commuter city. Highways are easily accessible from this area.

Some people could be seen using the rail system and metro transportation throughout the day/night. There are many bus stops and rail stations available for access. Travel through the community is easily done either by public or private forms of transportation. Within the 77004 area code you could easily find community centers, homeless shelters/soup kitchens, psychiatric centers, medical clinics and doctor's offices. The universities and colleges are very busy throughout the day and slow down during the night. You could also find gyms, recreational centers which are mostly for private use.

The major park along with the zoo is busy during the daytime. Shopping is done mostly outside of this area with exception to groceries. There are few retail stores and lots of centers which contain small shops, restaurants. Travel to the shopping centers outside of the area is easily facilitated via automobile but less so via public transportation due to distance/time constraints. In the middle portion of the 77004 zip code, you will find many Asian restaurants, banks and shopping centers. Additionally there are street signs written in Vietnamese within this area.

Most people who are walking in the street are younger to middle aged. There is a mixture of single persons and families. In some spots, you can see many homeless persons who are in parks, vacant lots or in front of community service centers/shelters. You will see lots of students during the day time near university/college campuses. Within these groups there are Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Caucasians. There are many bars/clubs in the mid town area which are very busy at night and on the weekend. Within a few block from this area you could find several major psychiatric service centers along with shelters.

Throughout the day you could find persons walking with beer in their hands and often smoking. Sometimes there are persons who appear to be suffering from a mental health condition walking around and yelling nonsense. This week there was a naked woman in an intersection yelling and cursing. The medical center is about 2 miles away from the middle portion of the 77004 zip code area. There are also many clinics within this area. The only evidence of political interest could be found in the many Obama campaign graffiti which is often found painted on the side of buildings.

There are several churches within this area that are from varied Christian denominations. I could not find nay mosques or synagogues. Most media is received at home via cable or satellite services; there are few, if any antennas in use since the conversion to HD programming. Most stress magazine racks contain media focused on gossip, shock factor rather than current news. The newspaper is always available though. All said, I like the area in which I live because it is close to work (the med center), and has easy access to other portions of the Houston area via freeway.

The community is a mosaic of age, races, economic and faith. Additionally, the museums, parks and zoo are nearby. References Stanhope, M. , Lancaster, J. (2008) Public health nursing: Population-centered health care in the community. St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier. US Department of Health and Human Services. (2011). Healthy People. GOV. Retrieved from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=40> City-Data. com. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com/zip/77004.html>