

Impact of COVID-19 on African Immigrant Living in New England- A Photovoice Project

Addressing the Health Needs of African Immigrants

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Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

- This program was funded through a Patient- Centered Outcomes Research Institute[®] (PCORI[®]) Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award.
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New England African Immigrant Health Research Consortium: The Partnership

- Africans For Improved Access (AFIA) program at the Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC)
- Office of Maine Refugee Services (OMRS)
- African Alliance of Rhode Island (AARI)
- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Health Equity (OHE)
- The University of Vermont – Larner College of Medicine (UVM)
- Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS)



The Impact of COVID-19 on African Immigrants Living in New England Project

Project Rationale

Greater risk of both acquiring coronavirus and experiencing severe symptoms or death related to COVID-19

Work in high-contact jobs, which carry higher risk of exposure.

Information on COVID-19 is not culturally and linguistically appropriate

Fears related to immigration status

Mental health challenges due to an inability to adjust or restrictions that prevent them from cultural and religious practices.



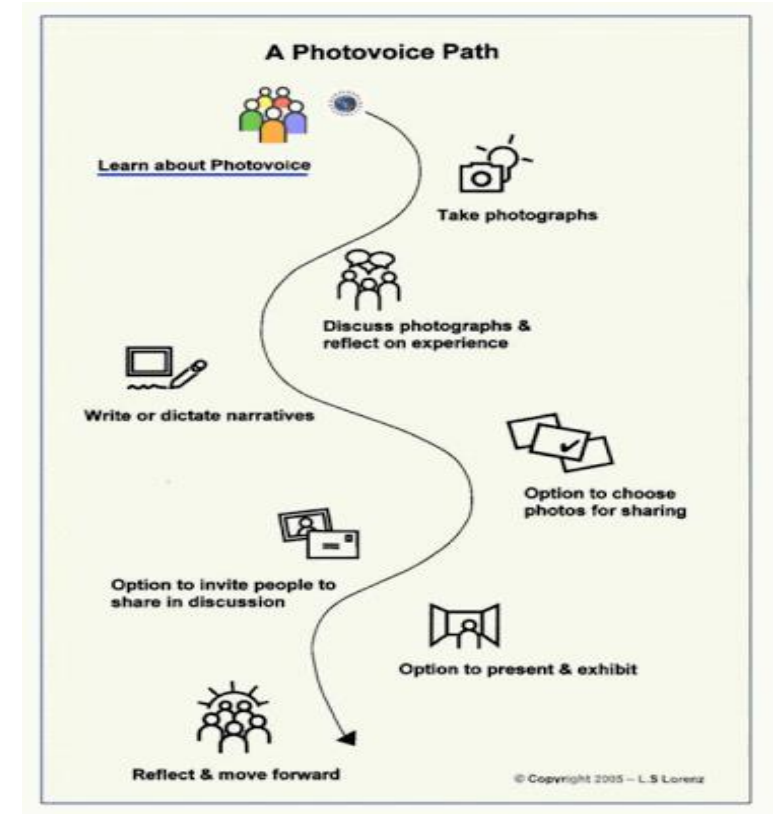
The Impact of COVID-19 on African Immigrants Living in New England Project

Photovoice Project Goal:

- Provide recommendations to researchers, providers and health care systems for engaging African immigrants into COVID-19 interventions.

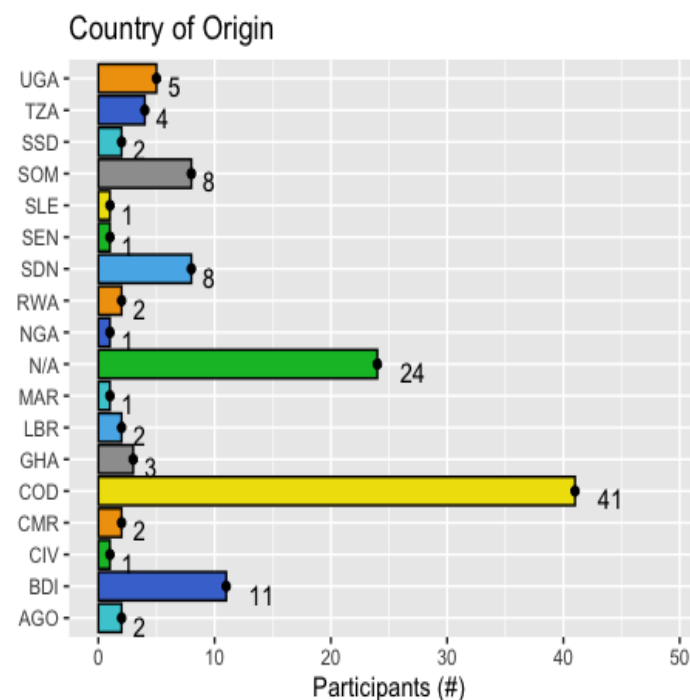
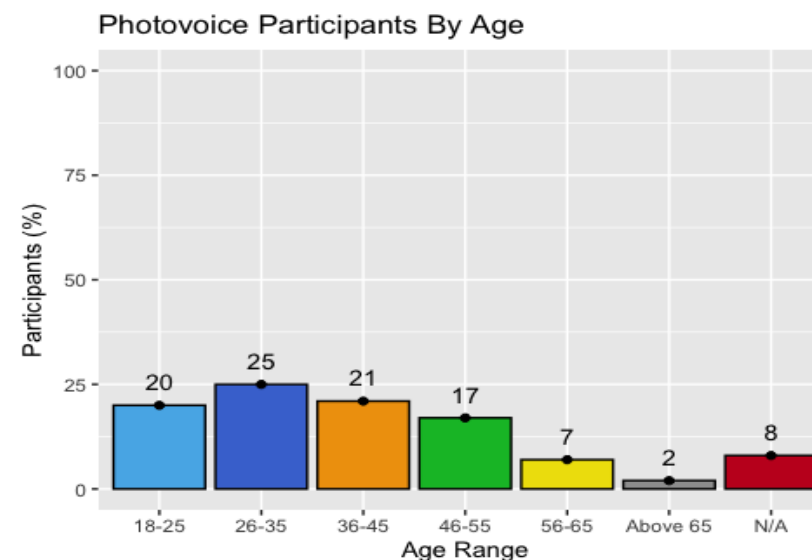
Photovoice Project Objectives:

- Document challenges related to COVID-19 that African immigrants in New England experience.
- Document successful strategies for addressing COVID-19 related challenges experienced by African immigrants in New England.

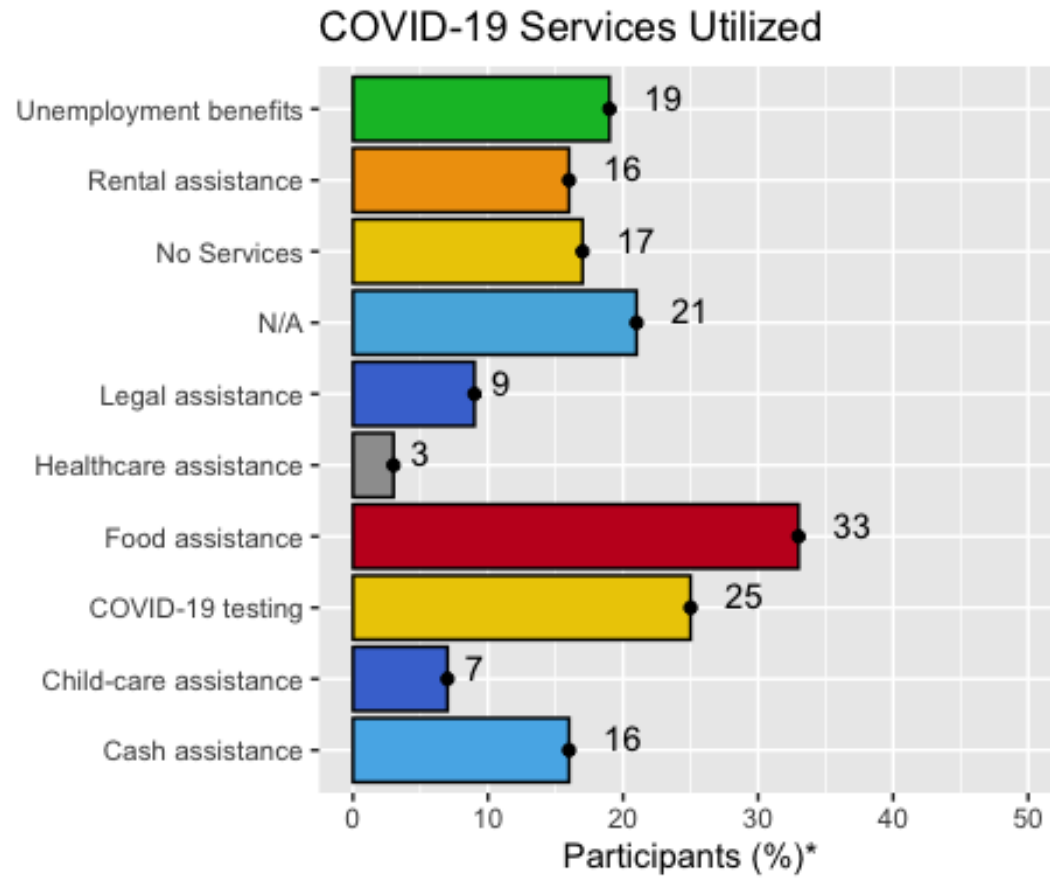


Demographics (N=118)

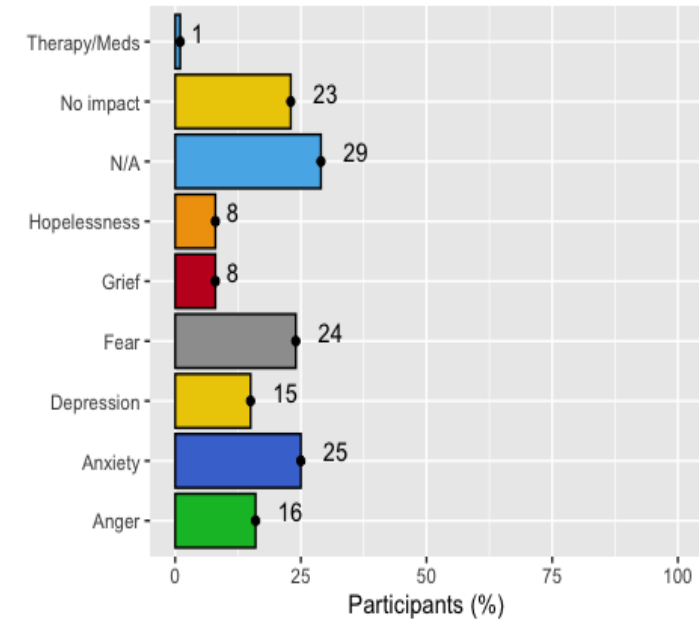
- Over 75% of participants are English speakers, 15% are Swahili speakers
- Over 75% are female
- 35% are refugees, 22% are permanent residents and 25% US Citizen
- 35% are single and 30% are legally married
- 60% are parents with an average of 4 children
- 25% have no education and aren't currently enrolled in school



Demographics: Experiences of COVID-19



Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19



- 14% tested positive for COVID-19
- 7% experienced symptoms but did not access care
- 30% loss their job

Please note that the percentages do not add up to 100 as the participants could select all answers that apply.

Framing Questions for Photo-taking

1. What was hard for you and/ or your family during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What is your experience accessing COVID-19 testing and seeking care?
3. What is your experience accessing other health services during the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. Where do you get information about COVID-19?
5. How are you addressing and being supported through your challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Themes for Challenges

Feelings of
Loneliness &
Isolation

Restrictive
Movement

Life Changes
in the “New”
Normal

Experiencing
Loss

System
Challenges

Fear of the
Unknown

Difficulties for
Our Children

Stress

Photostories: Challenges

Struggles of parents and students - Kids are struggling with distance learning from 9AM-3PM, One day I found my daughter fall asleep on her Chromebook as she got bored and lonely. Also, teachers disturbing parents with calls and messages when student is away from online classes. Sometimes they call parents while they are already at work.

Kids are studying home while some parents are struggling to work from home with the kids causing distraction.



Photostories: Challenges



Neglected - These are my children at a Black Lives Matter protest for racial justice. My daughter wanted to go because she is hopeful that there will someday be equality for all people. We must fight for equality by speaking up, by using our voices to be heard. Although this is my 1st protest, fighting for my rights isn't new to me. As a Deaf woman, I'm used to it, like insisting on my right to have a sign interpreter when I see my doctor. I rely on lip reading but now with Covid-19 everyone is required to wear masks to keep safe. This means that since I can no longer read lips I can't follow along in a conversation. Covid-19 has made my life more difficult because there have not been provisions put in place for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing. So I'm here to protest for my right to racial justice, but also for my right to communication access.

Themes for Strategies

Public Health
Guidelines

Support/
Social
Connections

Faith/Religion

Home
remedies

The partnership team is still working on analyzing the regional successful strategies but here are some themes that occurred commonly among all states.

Photostories: Successful Strategies

Blackseed - In Islam black seed is mentioned as superfood and that it's also used for respiratory conditions including asthma, allergies, cough, bronchitis, flu, swine flu, etc. Black seed is helpful during any sickness. Educate myself and get closer to my religion.



Photostories: Successful Strategies



Keeping the Faith - Coping strategy- prayer, church/fellowship

Strategies for Successful Project Implementation



Decentralized power to states to accommodate participants needs



Participants Ongoing Training + Support



Use interpreters and translated survey instruments



Community-based Partnership Development



Computer (virtual platforms) Literacy

Discussion

Based on the challenges and strategies:

What recommendations do you have for researchers, providers and health care systems for engaging African immigrants into COVID-19 interventions?

What stakeholders should be invited to the townhall to solidify recommendations?

What opportunities are available to disseminate findings from the project?

Next Steps for the Project



Continue
participatory data
analysis



Convene a townhall
to solidify
recommendations
(March 2021)



Disseminate findings
Traveling exhibit
Manuscripts

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