

Abstract:

Background/Problem:

Many people in the U.S. lack reliable transportation for medical appointments, with 6% of adults affected, particularly those with lower incomes and less education (22). Transportation barriers disproportionately impact the young, homeless, and low-income populations, leading to missed or delayed medical care. In Alton, Illinois, high poverty rates and low median incomes exacerbate these transportation challenges, restricting residents' access to their local pharmacy. Disparities in pharmaco-equity can result in patients not receiving medications or vaccinations which increases mortality and healthcare costs (5).

Methods:

The primary goal of this project is to improve access to pharmacy services for individuals with transportation challenges in Alton, Illinois, by identifying and informing them about low-cost transportation options. Research involved contacting various local organizations to compile a reference guide of transportation services, including details on cost, advantages, and disadvantages. This guide aims to help Alton residents access necessary healthcare services, ultimately improving community health and quality of life.

Results/discussion:

The reference guide for Alton residents lists various transportation services to pharmacies, each with unique operations, target populations, and costs. Our research found that affordable transportation options were severely limited, and most of the existing programs only assisted elderly or disabled individuals.

Conclusion:

Although a list of resources was compiled, further work is needed. Our project can be replicated for future research in other geographic areas with similar population distribution and transportation disparities. Most importantly, our project's findings can be used for advocacy efforts, potentially leading to new transportation programs and bridging the gap in favor of pharmaco-equity nationwide.