

SPECIAL TOPICS IN PUBLIC HEALTH  
ORIGINAL RESEARCH: FEATURED ABSTRACT FROM THE  
18TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

# Cost-effective, Community-based Strategies Targeting Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes Risk Factors Among African American Women in Faith-based Environments

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### PEER REVIEWED

The objective of this study was to examine the differences in heart-health behaviors of African American women in faith-based environments and the effects of faith-based interventions on behaviors.

Eliminating disparities among racial and ethnic groups and increasing quality of life and years of healthy life are the major goals of *REACH 2010* research demonstration projects. African Americans in Louisiana have alarming rates of death and disability due to heart disease and diabetes. Limited data are available on faith-based interventions among African American women.

Forty churches with memberships ranging from 100 to 15,000 each were randomized into 3 groups. The Community Health Assessment Program Survey (CHAPS), similar to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, was conducted among 1100 African American women 18 years and older. A profile from each church was used to collect baseline aggregate data. Each group received varied doses of intervention. All churches

received free annual blood pressure, body mass index, and lipid screening and counseling; screening resources were provided by community board members. Follow-up survey data were collected to determine the effects of interventions on reducing risk factors. A comparative analysis was conducted of baseline CHAPS data on 1100 women. Annual follow-up surveys are still in progress.

Participants have reported a need for chronic disease interventions that address a continuum of risk reduction, including response to emergency events such as heart attacks and strokes and referrals for rehabilitation resources. Also, the presence of respected community leaders and collaborative relationships has empowered *REACH 2010: At the Heart of New Orleans* to share resources and expand its reach to communities across the state.

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