

## **Comparison of Didactic Presentations and Drama to Promote Cardiovascular Health**

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The purpose of this study was to compare the implementation and subsequent short-term changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavioral intent among black audiences attending drama vs. didactic presentations promoting cardiovascular disease prevention.

The didactic presentations and the play "Heart to Heart: "Ain't your heart worth saving"" were developed to raise cardiovascular disease awareness, attitudes, preventive behaviors primarily among black women. The drama-based intervention was an adaptation of a play developed by a playwright from Brown University to a black southern audience by the Department of Theatre at North Carolina Central University. Our evaluation used a quasi-experimental approach. Our assumptions were that: 1) Individuals attending outreach community education would be motivated to make personal and family changes in CVD risk factors moving from contemplation to behavior change. 2) Culturally-relevant drama performances increase perceived self-efficacy through emotional arousal and would increase behavioral intentions from pre-contemplation to contemplation and behavior change resulting in greater impact on cardiovascular disease outcomes. Changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavioral intent were deemed appropriate indicators of future outcomes based on the theory of Theory of Reasoned Intent (or Action) and assessed using standardized and pilot-tested pre-and post tests.

We made 23 Didactic presentations in churches surrounding Durham, North Carolina from June 2003 to February 2004 with audiences ranging from 7 to 65 people. The play was performed on five consecutive evening from July 23 to July 27, 2003 in front of audiences ranging from 240 to 250 people. Across events, 423 were exposed to the didactic presentation and 1200 were exposed to the play. The response to the pre- and post tests was 62% among those attending the play performances and 86% among those attending church presentations. Analysis of the pre and post test data examined the change in CVD risk factor knowledge and intention to change proactive behavior as individual items and summary scores using paired t-tests. Those exposed to the didactic presentations scored significantly higher on the post-test than on the pre-test but no increase was observed among those who saw the play.

While knowledge for the play attendees remained the same as before the play and there was only slight gain in knowledge for those attending the didactic presentations. Between 90.3 and a 96.7% of the respondents in both settings indicated that because of the presentations they planned to engage in more physical exercise and to control their weight, blood pressure and blood sugar levels. A higher percentage of those in the Drama Group reported an intention to improve physical activity than those in the Presentation Group ( $p=0.02$ ). Follow up to date suggests that more than 50% of those indicating a commitment to change their behaviors are doing so.

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