

Institute Name: Public Health Leadership Institute of Florida

Project/Case Title: Enhancing Awareness of Mosquito Borne Diseases in Migrants and the Elderly Residing in Mobile Home Parks Palm Beach, Florida

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Mosquito control is the most effective way to prevent transmission of WNV and other arboviruses to humans and other animals. Public education about vector-borne diseases, particularly about modes of transmission and means of preventing or reducing risk for exposure, is a critical component of mosquito control program. A public education door-to-door campaign among mobile home parks and migrant communities was conducted in Palm Beach County, Florida in July 2003. The goal of this campaign was to measure the knowledge of this population about the mosquito control and to evaluate several public health education materials, flyers, posters and DVD.

Sixty-eight households from three sites were surveyed and provided with carry-home information on mosquito control. The post-test was conducted among 20 residents and the valuation of the information after the project was conducted one week after the first door-to-door campaign. Same questionnaire was used for the post-test.

This study showed that 60.3% of population surveyed never received information about mosquito control and 32.3% did not know that mosquitoes might be a vector for certain diseases. Around 17.6% of the residents did not know why we need to control mosquitos and 32.3% did not know what to do to control them. Mosquito repellents are the most known and used method for the protection against mosquito bites among this population. Proportions of correct answers are higher for the three main questions among the participants after they received the information. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

This study showed that there is an urgent need to implement a continuous educational program for the population at high risk of exposure to mosquitoes in Palm Beach County. Door-to-door visiting seems an effective method of contacting persons and increasing community awareness of mosquito control. Education campaign should take into account the diversity of our community. Information needs to be given in other languages and educational material needs to be translated principally into Spanish and Creole. The knowledge gained from this project is already helping to enhance subsequent current public information and community outreach efforts. The study suggests that future research explore how these campaigns may be enhanced and what role they may play in preventing some high risk groups of being exposed to mosquito-borne diseases.