The 4Ms in a Pandemic: A Survey of Training Needs Among Healthcare Professionals, Older Adults, and Community Members

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INTRO

The University of New England, in collaboration with the University of Maine, received funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to improve the health and well-being of Maine’s older adults through enhanced training under HRSA’s Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). AgingME GWEP is a statewide collaborative effort focused on training enhancements and practice transformation processes at the primary care level. Participants of AgingME GWEP programming and events were surveyed for feedback on geriatrics training needs and gaps in training in context of the 4Ms, a framework for understanding age-friendly healthcare. These 4Ms comprise What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility.

METHODS

1. N = 159 (68 AgingME GWEP program partners, community members, and healthcare providers participants, 26 colloquium survey participants; 65 Lunch and Learn surveys participants).
2. The AgingME GWEP training needs assessment survey, colloquium survey, and Lunch and Learn surveys consisted of demographic, open-response, and multiple choice questions.
3. Common themes were identified in the open response questions and descriptives were gathered for demographic and multiple choice questions.

RESULTS

The combined results from all responses of the COVID-19 training needs survey indicate a need for continued awareness of emotional and mental health and well-being, as well as the importance of encouraging connections and mitigating the effects of social isolation during these unusual times.

COVID-19 Training Topics of Interest (N = 68)

- Medications
- Healthy aging
- Cognition changes
- Social isolation & loneliness
- Dementia/Alzheimer's
- In-person training: instructor led (26%)
- In-person training: subject matter expert (23%)
- Webinar trainings (14%)
- Mounting in-place (14%)
- Isolation and loneliness (12%)
- Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementia

DISCUSSION

The combined results from all responses of the COVID-19 training needs survey indicate a need for continued awareness of emotional and mental health and well-being, as well as the importance of encouraging connections and mitigating the effects of social isolation during these unusual times. Findings provide insights into preferred training formats for older adults and professionals in these topics. Understanding the needs of older adults in the age of COVID-19 and meeting those needs through continued education and training is an important aspect of an age-friendly healthcare system.

Funding statement: This research was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HS62P0999986) and the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, grant number HS62P0999986, under agreement number 7,492,000,19-01, between the University of New England and HRSA. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.