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Beyond the Volcanoes: A Community Partnership for Health in Rural Nicaragua

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Background: Health inequities related to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geography exist in rural Nicaragua due in part to lack of access to health services. The purpose of this ongoing project is to improve health equity in rural Nicaragua through social transformation using community-based participatory action research. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, school health, and primary health care theories provided the framework for this research. **Methods:** Community-based participatory action research involves six phases: partnership, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. In the implementation phase, the goal was to build stoves that would remove smoke from the homes and in turn improve the respiratory health of the community. Members of the community were chosen to receive stoves through a raffle. The supplies for the stoves were divided among those chosen. Families worked with a local mason to assemble their stoves. Data on respiratory health were collected from the members in the community receiving the stoves to serve as a baseline for future evaluation of the project. **Results:** The community worked with the research team and the local mason to assemble stoves with chimneys to improve respiratory health. Baseline data will be analyzed and presented. **Conclusions:** By partnering with the community, the researchers were able to implement a project of importance to the community to help meet the community members' health-related goals.

Information about the Authors:

Chelsea Zeman is a junior nursing major and Cathy Wingstrom is a sophomore nursing major. Neither student had any experience with this problem prior to joining the research team, but both were very interested in it. Since both are pursuing careers in nursing, this opportunity is a great way to expand their knowledge of the nursing role in a holistic sense.

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