

RESEARCH BRIEF

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STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING ADOLESCENTS IN RURAL AREAS IN FIREARM INJURY RESEARCH

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Participant recruitment, the process of identifying, consenting, and enrolling individuals, is a central aspect of human sciences research. Barriers to recruitment can be categorized into participant, recruiter, and institutional factors. Firearm injury research poses unique barriers to recruitment, particularly among rural adolescents who are at high-risk for firearm-related injury but have been historically understudied. Developmental factors related to adolescence must be aligned with recruitment, assent/consent, and data collection strategies to minimize barriers to participation in research. Identifying specific strategies to address recruitment barriers tailored to firearm-related research can help future researchers engage rural adolescents in injury prevention efforts.

APPROACH

Informed by the **Youth Experiences in Rural Washington: Research on Firearm Safety project**, a community-based participatory research study of adolescents aged 13 to 18 years living in rural Washington, researchers at the University of Washington's Center for Firearm Injury Prevention (C-FIP) identified **barriers and strategies for recruiting rural adolescents in firearms research**.

FINDINGS

Several recruitment barriers and related strategies emerged with the potential to enhance firearm-related research with rural adolescents. These are separated into **participant-** and **recruiter-/institutional-related factors**.

Participant-related factors:



Confidentiality



Misalignment with the developmental stage



Transportation



Mistrust of the research process

Recruiter-related and institutional-related factors:



Institutional structure



Personnel characteristics



Access to or ability to reach the study population

Across these factors, three key considerations emerged related to considering **recruitment logistics** (e.g., scheduling flexibility, adequate and aligned incentives), taking a **community-based participatory research approach** (e.g., engaging partners, adolescents, parents, and experts in planning and recruitment), and **accounting for developmental stage** (e.g., training for recruitment personnel, use of developmentally-affirming practices).

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

01

Reducing the burden of firearm injury and death for rural adolescents and developing effective interventions requires understanding and navigating recruitment barriers.

02

Community-based interventions are particularly vital for amplifying rural adolescent voices and tailoring projects to the context where adolescents live.

03

Strategies identified in this project can guide future qualitative or mixed methods data collection informing firearm injury prevention.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC PLEASE REFER TO:

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