

Evaluation Abstract: Evaluation of the CAS-Carrera Program

Grantee

Morehouse School of Medicine, Health Promotion and Resource Center
Project Director: Mary Langley, Ph.D., MPH, RN, CPP (mlangley@msm.edu)]

Evaluator

Tressa Tucker & Associates, LLC;
Tressa Tucker, Ph.D. (tressatuckerconsulting@comcast.net)]

Intervention Name

Children's Aid Society/Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program (Carrera)

Intervention Description

The Carrera Program is a holistic youth development model inclusive of a comprehensive health and sex education curriculum. The program operates seven core elements or components during an after-school program. The core components are: Homework Assistance (4 hours per week), Family Life and Sex Education (FLSE) (1 hour per week), Power Group (1 hour per week), Job Club (1 hour per week), Life Time Individual Sports (1 hour per week), Self-Expression (1 hour per week), and Health and Dental Services (as needed). Homework assistance provides daily educational support; FLSE is a weekly comprehensive sex education class; Power Group is a weekly discussion group on relevant life issues; Job Club is a weekly financial literacy and introductory vocational education class; Self Expression allows youth to explore their creativity in the arts; Life Time Individual Sports introduces youth to sports they can enjoy through adulthood; and Health and Dental Services provides immunizations and needed doctor visits.

The Carrera after-school program operated Monday through Friday from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m., with occasional Saturday activities, in three distinct geographic locations: rural, micro-politan (rural-like), and urban areas of Georgia. The program ran 42 weeks per year during the grant period. The program was delivered by Carrera-certified staff trained by the developer and a Fidelity Monitor.

Counterfactual

The Boys and Girls Club (BGC)

Counterfactual Description

The BGC is a national program with after-school and summer programs strategically located throughout the country in predominately low-income neighborhoods. The BGC provides a national curriculum, which is used by all the selected BGCs.

The BGCs selected to participate in this study included three regional Clubs serving youth in similar areas where intervention programming was occurring. The after-school programs for these Clubs operated from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. All Clubs followed the national model with the following core components: Education and Career Development (4 hours per week), Healthy Life Styles (1 hour per week), Character and Leadership Development (1 hour per week), Arts and Cultural Enrichment (4 hours per week), and Sports and Recreation (5 hours per week). The Clubs used the evidence-based Smart Moves Curriculum for the Healthy Life Styles component, which promotes abstinence from substance abuse and adolescent sexual involvement; as compared to the Carrera FLSE class which solely focused on comprehensive sex education. The Smart Moves curriculum was delivered by staff trained in the national model by their administration.

Primary Research Question(s)

1. What is the impact of the Carrera Program (intervention) relative to the BGC (comparison) on sexual initiation (ever had sex) of program youth after three years of the intervention?

2. What is the impact of the Carrera Program (intervention) relative to the BGC (comparison) on recent risky sexual behavior (having unprotected sexual intercourse) of program youth after three years of the intervention?

Sample

The study sample included 400 youth who were in 6th or 7th grade (ages 11-12) who applied to a Morehouse Carrera Program or a selected Georgia BGC. The three intervention sites were selected at proposal submission based on previous working relationship with Morehouse School of Medicine. The three regional BGCs were selected based on demographic and geographic similarity to one of the Carrera Programs. Eligibility criteria for youth included: (1) enrollment in an intervention or comparison site; (2) parental and youth consent; and (3) cognitive/academic functioning at a 3th grade level, determined by program staff. Two hundred and twenty youth were enrolled in the intervention group and 180 youth were enrolled in the comparison group.

Setting

This study examined the effect of the Carrera Program in community-based organizations located in a rural, a micro-politan, and an urban setting, for both the intervention and comparison groups. The rural sites, intervention and comparison are located in central/south Georgia. The micro-politan sites, intervention and comparison are located in middle/central Georgia. The urban or metropolitan sites, intervention and comparison are located in north Georgia, inside the metro-Atlanta area.

Research Design

The study is a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design (QED) with clusters serving as the unit of assignment. The research groups were formed by selecting pre-existing community-based organizations. The following data sources were collected: paper-and-pencil survey, daily attendance, component attendance, observation forms, focus group and interviews in the fall following the first three years of participation (2012, 2013, and 2014). All data are interim data as the intervention serves youth for four years.

Method

There is one analytic sample (N = 204) for the primary research questions: all youth who completed the year three survey. The analysis pooled data across intervention and comparison sites. A Hierarchical Logistic Regression Model was used to test for program impacts. Covariates included select demographic variables, site geography (urban vs. rural), and previous sexual history. For answering the two primary research questions we used the .025 significance level to adjust for multiple comparisons.

Impact Findings

Three years into the intervention, Carrera youth were no less likely than BGC youth to have ever had sex or to have had recent risky sex. One significant finding was observed, however, on a secondary research question: What is the impact of the Carrera Program relative to BGC on sexual initiation (ever had sex) after one year of the intervention. The Carrera group had a statistically significantly lower level of sexual initiation than the BGC group. No other findings were statistically significant.

Implementation Findings

Morehouse School of Medicine implemented the components of Carrera with fidelity; however attendance was low.

Schedule/Timeline

Sample enrollment (400 youth) was completed in fall 2011. Follow-up data were collected in fall 2012 (after one year of programming), fall 2013 (after two years of programming), and fall 2014 (after three years of programming).