

## **Health Education Priorities: Perspectives from Women's Voices**

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Women seek health information from many sources including peers, media, Internet and health care providers. The purpose of this project was to determine perceived health information needs among diverse women in various geographic locations to plan health-related outreach in a Midwestern state. A descriptive, qualitative study utilizing a series of focus groups was conducted. Women also completed a short questionnaire to obtain demographic and other individual data. Community partners assisted in arranging and co-facilitating eight focus groups. Eighty-seven women representing West African, Latina, Caucasian, Hmong and American Indian communities in both urban and rural locations participated. Utilizing content analysis, six themes were identified from transcripts of the focus groups. Despite some differences, topics discussed in the groups were remarkably similar. These included the multiple roles women play in society and how they often care for others before themselves. Women wanted information on nutrition, weight and exercise for health promotion and disease prevention, as well as information on a wide variety of health conditions. One factor consistently emphasized was a preference for group health-related support. Family and community involvement were emphasized in all six themes. Direct quotes from the transcripts highlight the women's preferences for information as well as their comments about the current health care system. Specific quotes highlighting cultural preferences and geographic issues are included. The voices of these women may contribute both locally and beyond in the search for solutions to provide comprehensive health care in the US.

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