

Abstract

Using data to spur social change: Developing healthy aging data reports to accelerate age-friendly progress

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Background: This abstract summarizes work in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island supported by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. **Objectives:** To describe the Healthy Aging Data Reports in each state. They include community profiles reporting 120-170 indicators of healthy aging risk (population characteristics, wellness, nutrition, health behaviors, chronic disease, behavioral health, access to care, health service utilization, disability, civic life, safety and transportation, housing, and economic issues). **Methods:** Data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, US Census and other sources were analyzed using small area estimation techniques to determine age-gender adjusted community and state rates. Interactive online maps show the distribution of disease and highlight health disparities. Visualizing the distribution of disease allows policymakers to detect areas of strength and health and areas facing challenges in healthy aging. **Results:** Comparing state rates for for MA/RI/NH adults 65+ ever diagnosed with: diabetes (32%/36%/28.2%), hypertension (78%/79%/70.2%), stroke (13%/13%/10.8%), Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (14%/14%/12%), depression (29%/30%/28.8%), and 4+ chronic conditions (59%/64%/54.4%). Multivariate analyses have examined racial and ethnic disparities, gender differences in healthy aging, and differences by residential setting (city, town, rural area). **Conclusions:** Stakeholders in each state have integrated the Data Report into their advocacy, community development, and age-friendly work. For example, the Data Reports helped advocates in Massachusetts lobby for additional funding for evidence-based chronic disease self-management programs delivered in local senior centers. In Rhode Island transportation gaps identified in the Data Report helped advocates lobby for discounted bus fares for older people. In New Hampshire the Alliance for Healthy Aging has used the Data Report to educate legislators about the opportunities and challenges related to an aging population and to advocate for a statewide commission. In each state a growing group of stakeholders are working together to promote policies and practices that promote health equity and community empowerment. **Public Health Implications:** Comparisons across all the New England states (CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME) showed that, in general, changes over time tended to occur in the same direction in the region. Suggesting there may be larger ecological factors at work.

Epidemiology Public health or related research Social and behavioral sciences

