

Greetings! Welcome to the 2023 spring issue of the Virginia Journal of Public Health. Our journal does not have a predetermined topic agenda but publishes all relevant public health topics, which could assist clinical practitioners, epidemiologists, and other health professionals, to understand and be better equipped to address Virginia's public health challenges.

The first article uses scientific method to investigate flu and COVID-19 vaccine uptake in Southeastern Virginia between December 2020 and March 2021. Findings suggest uninsured patients receiving care at a primary care facility were less likely to be willing to receive flu/COVID-19 vaccinations compared to insured patients attending the same primary care facility. Campaigns to improve vaccination rates may require additional efforts beyond making the vaccines freely accessible to all. Increasing trust in vaccination may be a critical component of future vaccine campaigns.

The second article is a policy perspective about tobacco surcharges and sugar-sweetened beverages taxes. This perspective suggests vulnerable populations are negatively impacted by these taxes. The tobacco surcharge has been found to drive smokers out of the insurance market, making it difficult for them to receive the health care and support they need to quit smoking. Individuals in poverty tend to drink more sugar-sweetened beverages. The surcharges for such beverages exacerbate poverty and potentially health problems. The author implores policy makers to support truly value-added public health interventions.

The third article is a rapid review of the literature and presents collective evidence-based self-care behaviors, practices, and programs for rural Black women to address cardiovascular disease disparities. This paper sheds light to address CVD, the leading cause of death among Black rural women.

Opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction are public health concerns in Virginia. The 4th article presents a quality improvement approach for opioid risk mitigation. This project builds on previous studies using the opioid risk tool ORT-ODU in pain management clinics. This QI project suggests ORT-ODU screening alerts providers of the additional care needed by patients. Authors recommend the implementation of ORT-ODU screening in pain management clinics.

The last article, "Structural barriers to health care access and IPV disclosure in first-generation Latina immigrants" discusses healthcare systems barriers that prevent intimate partner violence disclosure by Latin women. Authors suggest future directions to protect this vulnerable population, which often lacks insurance and faces language barriers.

Stay tuned for our next issue! We invite clinicians, researchers, and other health professionals to help us keep Virginia healthy by sharing their findings!

Happy writing,

Maria, Jen, and Marilyn

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