

Participatory Health Research with Immigrant Communities in Germany

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Participatory health research is a valuable tool for collaboratively identifying health problems, developing solutions and taking action in community settings. This article describes a participatory health research project with immigrant communities in Germany in the field of health promotion and HIV prevention (PaKoMi). The study design applies the principles of *Community-Based Participatory Research* (CBPR): community partners (i.e. members of African, Bulgarian, Russian and Turkish immigrant communities), service providers (i.e. staff from AIDS Service Organisations) and researchers were involved equitably (with shared decision making power) in all phases of the research processes: from formulating the aims and research questions to collecting and analysing data and disseminating the study findings. The stage model of participation is used to assess and evaluate the level of participation that could be realised in the project. It is shown that perspectives on participation can vary considerably between community partners, service providers and researchers. Overall, the different levels of involvement and participation achieved were evaluated positively, and the benefit of this participation is described for the communities and prevention practice.

Key words: participation, community, HIV, im/migrants, peer research

Introduction

Participatory health research has been recognised as a valuable tool for collaboratively identifying health problems, developing solutions and taking