

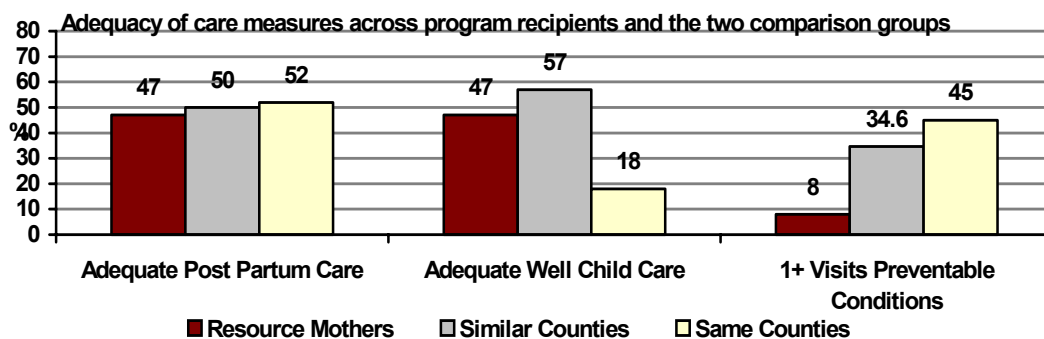
Assessing the Effect of a Lay Home Visitation Program for Rural High-Risk Women and Infants

This small pilot study tested a retrospective data set approach for evaluating the effectiveness of a community health worker program at improving pregnancy and birth outcomes. The home visitation program uses lay health workers to provide health education, referral, and social support to rural, low-income, Medicaid-insured pregnant African American women and their infants. For the study, de-identified data elements were linked across Vital Records Birth Certificates, Medicaid, and the Resource Mothers Program.

Receipt of preventive services and health outcomes were compared across three groups of mother-infant pairs: (a) participants in the Resource Mothers Program during its first year of operation ($n = 39$), (b) a comparison group from similar counties in which the program was not offered ($n = 243$), and (c) a comparison group from the same counties 2 years prior to program implementation ($n = 283$).

Findings:

- About half of mothers obtained adequate prenatal and post-partum care. Adequacy of maternal preventive services was similar among the three groups.
- Adequate well child-care was obtained by 37% of infants. However, infants in the Resource Mothers Program (47%) were nearly 3 times as likely as those in the Same Counties Comparison Group (18%) to obtain adequate preventive care.
- Fewer infants (8%) in the Resource Mothers Program than in Similar (25%) or Same Counties (22%) Groups recorded any visits for preventable conditions.
- A retrospective comparative design is a feasible method for assessing program effects on preventive services and health outcomes.



Details are available in the full report, Development of a Methodology for Assessing the Effect of a Lay Home Visitation Program for Rural High-Risk Women and Infants. This report is available from the South Carolina Rural Health Research Center.