

Critique

This descriptive study was completed to assess the demographic characteristics of respondents; the kinds of services provided by twenty-eight social agencies, organizations, and institutions; and the perceptions of low-income clients held by providers. The purpose of the survey was to gather base-line data to improve the COALITION's ability to coordinate services and planning as well as to avoid duplication of services.

Although the degree to which the COALITION approach for multiple-problem urban settings in housing projects has been used in other inner cities is not indicated, there has been considerable research on the effects of over-crowding of animals as well as people, health care service, delivery systems, and mental health of the poor. Dawkins' study approaches these problems from a different perspective: the attitudes of those persons who provide the services to inner-city clients.

There are several implications of such a study. Based upon Dawkins' reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it appears that the COALITION's emphasis upon individual and family counseling may be out of touch with their clients' needs. For example, eighty-four percent of the respondents were concerned about the safety of their clients, yet it would appear that this is a low priority of the COALITION member agencies. Because the questionnaire does not elicit specific data about gaps in services, additional data need to be collected from the providers. In future reported research on the COALITION Dawkins should provide a more complete description of each agency and include their source of funding and whether they are branches of larger agencies as this would be a good indicator of the degree of flexibility or change in policy which would be feasible.

As Dawkins suggests, the omission of client data is a very real problem which must be addressed in later studies. However, the author must be commended for addressing this topic, for solutions are certainly needed in the area. She indicates that future studies must be done, and they should--for COALITION approaches can be an effective tool for inner-agency communication.

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