

Examining the Factors that Limit the Participation of Eligible Mothers in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

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Introduction

In Florida, there is an estimated 420,000 individuals utilizing the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) each month¹. WIC is a program that strives to protect the wellness of low-income mothers and their young children who are unable to meet their necessary nutritional needs. However, it is speculated that not all eligible women participate in these services. Research has shown that factors such as racial/ethnic identification, age, and income directly affect the lack of participation in supplemental program services by eligible families

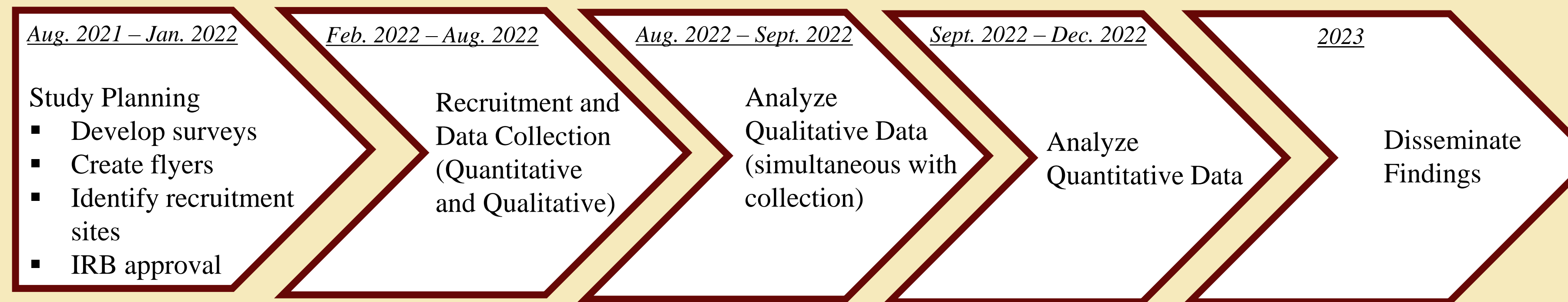
Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore what factors may cause eligible women to be unable or unwilling to participate in WIC services in their community.

Methods

- We will recruit postpartum mothers (N=100) from ages 18-40 years who have given birth in the last 6 months. A portion of these mothers will be WIC eligible.
- From that subsample, we will determine the number of mothers eligible, but not currently receiving WIC services from the North-Central Florida community.
- Data will be collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods, to determine reasons mothers are not utilizing WIC services

Timeline



Literature Review

- Participation in WIC services is highly associated with frequent prenatal visits and sources of prenatal care.²
- Results suggest that the effort of promoting WIC enrollment must be pushed by prenatal care providers.²
- Prenatal care is a direct influence on rates of program enrollment.²
- Women who experienced unplanned pregnancies and less social supports were more likely to participate in WIC programs³
- Women who experienced more structural barriers were less likely to participate.³
- Women who classify as Asian or Pacific Islander face increased challenges in obtaining WIC services.³
- Women who identified as Hispanic or Black were more likely to engage in WIC services in comparison to White or Asian/Pacific Islander women.³
- Demographics have substantial influence on the participation of WIC services.

Themes

Factors influencing WIC participation include:

- Transportation
- Marital Status
- Income Variability
- Prenatal care
- Racial Demographics
- Housing Locations

Hypotheses

- It is anticipated that factors such as prenatal care, marital status, and housing will contribute to the lack of participation by eligible mothers in WIC services, and we predict that these factors will be the conclusive reason as to why eligible women do not receive these services.
- Through our research, we hope to explain what factors restrict WIC program participation in eligible households.
- By better understanding what factors limit or decrease participation, we can better the attainability and availability of WIC services to eligible women.

References

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3. Liu, C. H., & Liu, H. (2016, March 9). *Concerns and structural barriers associated with WIC participation among wic-eligible women*. Wiley Online Library. Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/phn.12259>

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