

04

**SOURCE OF SAFETY INFORMATION—THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERSONAL APPEAL FOR SERVICE UTILISATION AMONG URBAN FAMILIES**

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**Background** Interpersonal dialogue and the Internet have been established as sources of health information. However, little is known about how urban families learn about community programmes.

**Aims** The aims of this study are to determine: (1) sources of information for community programmes among urban residents and (2) if source of information is associated with utilising a free smoke alarm distribution programme.

**Methods** Surveys were conducted with a random sample of city residents to measure safety information.  $\chi^2$  tests were used to determine differences between sources of information and knowledge and utilisation of the smoke alarm programme.

**Results** Of the 603 participants interviewed most received information from friends/neighbours (64%), newspapers (54%), and the Internet (35%). Women compared to men were more likely to use personal (88% and 81%, respectively,  $p=0.01$ ) and sources of information (78% and 67%,  $p=0.01$ ). Compared to those with a high school diploma, those without one were less likely to identify the Internet ( $p=0.01$ ) as an informational source. Those who cited personal and print sources were more likely to have heard about the smoke alarm programme (89% and 79%, respectively,  $p=0.01$ ) compared to those who cited Internet or television and radio (34% and 58%, respectively,  $p=0.01$ ). Individuals who used personal sources were more likely to have participated in the smoke alarm programme ( $p=0.01$ ).

**Significance** This work underscores the continued importance of personal appeals to promote safety services in communities.