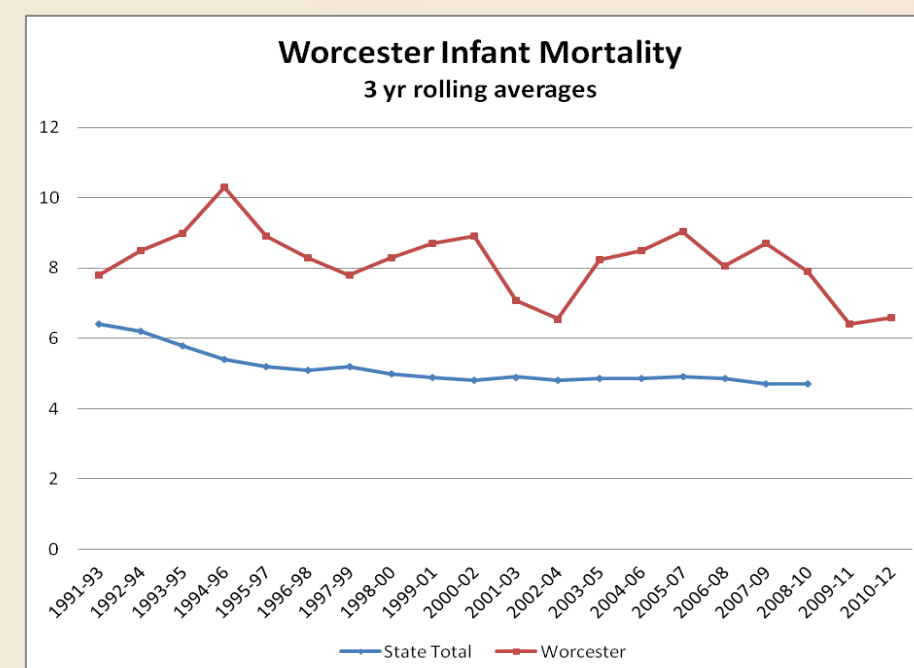


African Women's Health and Disparities in Infant Mortality: An Assessment of the Ghanaian Population in Worcester

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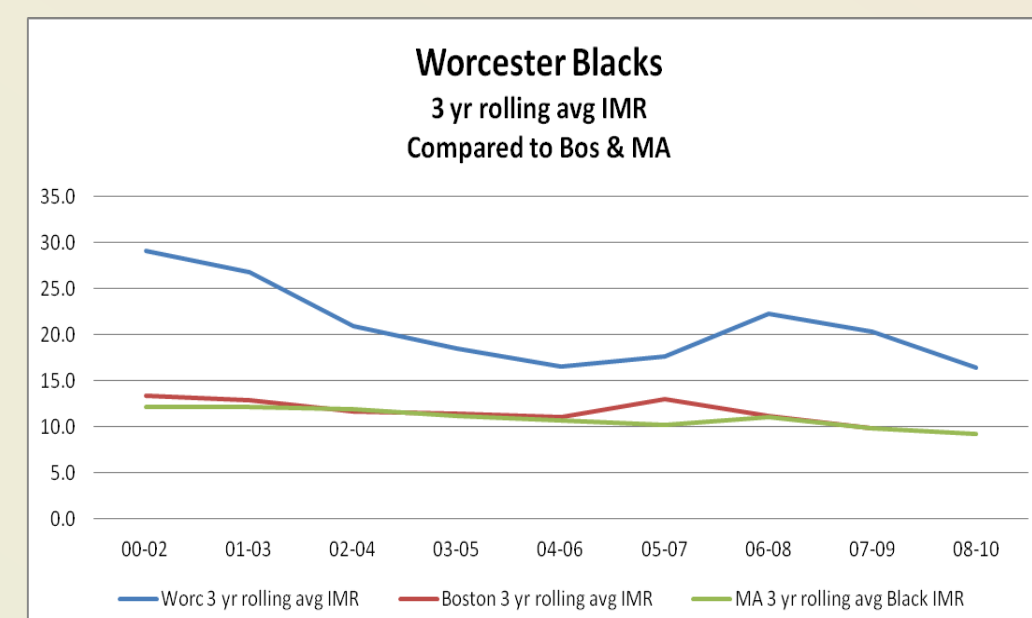
Ghanaian Population and Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rates in Worcester are substantially higher than the state average; there were 9 infant deaths in Worcester per 1000 live births in 2010, while the state of Massachusetts rested at a steady 5 per 1000 live births.



As this graph shows, infant mortalities per 1000 live births in Worcester have remained greater than the state average since at least the early nineties. This graph also shows that in recent years, Worcester's infant mortality rate has declined. **Source: Dale Magee, MD,MS**

The rate of black infant deaths, however, is much higher; it fluctuated between approximately 15-30 deaths per 1000 live births from the early 2000's onwards



As this graph shows, the infant mortalities of blacks in Worcester is significantly higher than those of blacks in other locations of Massachusetts. **Source: Dale Magee, MD, MS**

The rate of black infant deaths is primarily due to the large numbers of African– and specifically Ghanaian– immigrants in Worcester (**McGee, MD, MS**)

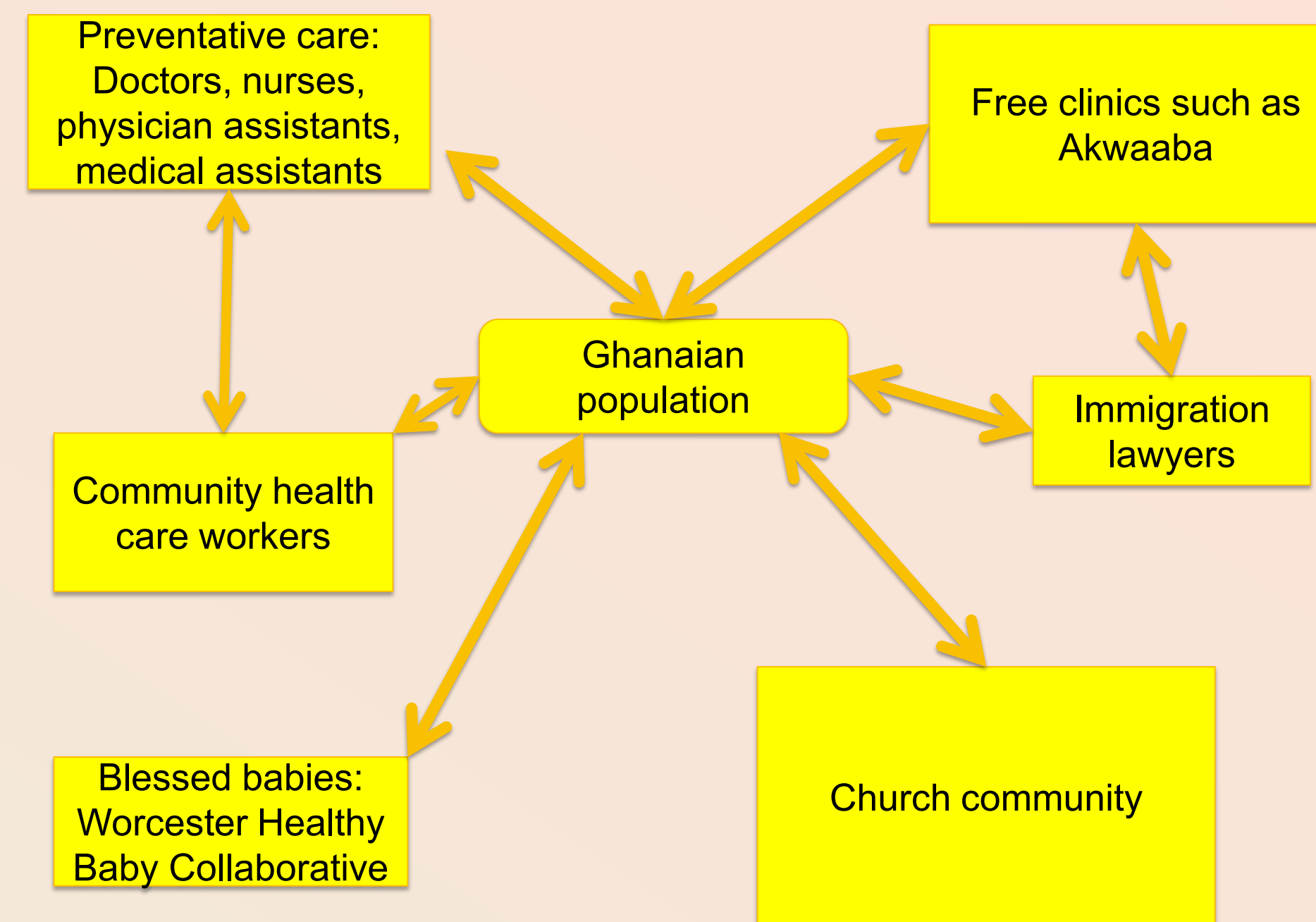
Challenges facing the Ghanaian Community

Nutrition – Ghanaian Immigrants struggle to reconcile traditional diets with the food available here.

Stress – Ghanaian women often work multiple jobs and attend school on top of their family responsibilities.

Healthcare – Cultural and economic barriers reduce access to adequate healthcare

Interprofessional Networks



Source: Dale Magee, MD,MS

Analysis of Interprofessional Networks

Strengths:

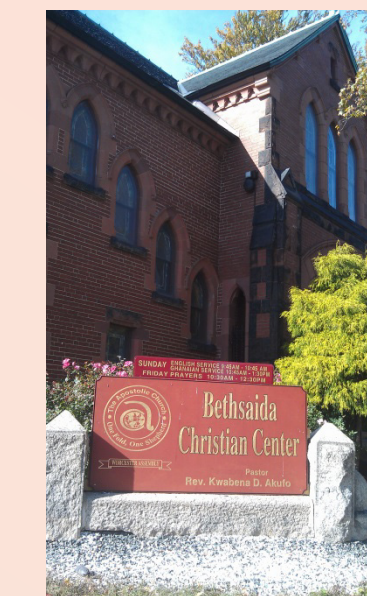
- Professionals within existing institutions are tightly connected
 - Ex: The doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and staff at the Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center communicate clearly and effectively
- The Worcester Ghanaian community is active and well organized
 - Ex: Ghanaian churches in Worcester (approx. 15) are well attended and church groups play a significant role in daily life

Potential Improvements

- Community health workers can bridge the gap between communities and social resources
 - Ex: Ghanaian OB case managers at the Family Health Center have been successful connecting the Ghanaian population with prenatal/postnatal services and reducing infant mortality

Service Project

Health Education Workshop at Bethsaida Christian Center Church



- Goals: To provide basic public health information to a Ghanaian Church Group
- Progress:
 - On October 19th we gave a health education workshop at the Bethsaida Christian Center Church to 14 woman
 - The workshop focused on overall health such as: nutrition, exercise, stress reduction, and preventative medicine.
- Outcome: Participants were very engaged in the presentation and expressed interest in future sessions.

Recommendations

- Worcester Healthy Baby Coalition is in the early stages of the Nhyira Ba program, a health education program designed for prenatal and infant care in the Ghanaian population
- Health Professionals and Organizations should aim for a return of funding for Worcester Healthy Start
- Increased attention to social determinants of health
- Church members indicated an interest in Blood Pressure screenings. Clerkship members are researching putting together a program

References

Dale Magee, MD,MS. Worcester Healthy Babies Collaborative

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