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A randomized trial of recruitment methods for older African American men in the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian (PLCO) cancer screening trial

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Background Incidence rates for many types of cancer are higher among African American men than in the general population, yet African American men are less likely to participate in cancer screening trials. This paper describes the outcomes of a randomized trial (the AAMEN Project) designed to recruit African American men aged 55-74 years to a prostate, lung and colorectal cancer screening trial.

Methods The recruitment interventions address four types of barriers to clinical trial participation: sociocultural barriers, economic barriers, individual barriers and barriers inherent in study design. Subjects were randomized to a control group or one of three increasingly intensive intervention arms, which used different combinations of mail, phone and in person church-based recruitment.

Results Of the 39 432 African American men residing in the geographically defined study population (southeastern Michigan and northern Ohio), 17 770 men (45%) could be contacted, and 12 400 (31% of 39 432) were found to be eligible to participate. No statistically significant differences in age, education or income level were found among participants in the four study arms. A significantly greater enrollment yield (3.9%) was seen in the most intensive, church-based intervention arm, compared to the enrollment yields in the other two intervention arms (2.5 and 2.8%) or the control group (2.9%) ($P < 0.01$).

Conclusions The intervention that involved the highest rate of face-to-face contact with the study participants produced the highest enrollment yield, but several strategies that were thought could improve yield had no effect. These findings, which are consistent with current literature on population-based recruitment, should facilitate the development of future recruitment efforts involving older African American men. *Clinical Trials* 2004; 1: 343-351. www.SCTjournal.com

Introduction

The Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian (PLCO) Cancer Screening Trial is a 22-year, multisite randomized cancer screening trial funded by the National Cancer Institute [1-5]. The primary objective of the PLCO Cancer Screening Trial is to determine whether screening for the four PLCO Cancer Screening Trial cancers, which account for

48% of all cancer-related deaths in the United States, decreases mortality from these cancers in adults aged 55-74 years at entrance to the screening. PLCO Cancer Screening Trial participants must be asymptomatic for any of the study cancers at the time of enrollment. In 1996, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Cancer Institute funded an ancillary PLCO Cancer Screening Trial study titled "Recruiting African American Men

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