Many tribes manage transit programs to help residents travel to and from health care facilities (National Congress of American Indians, 2013). Though proximity (or distance) is often treated as being synonymous with access to resources, access is a multidimensional concept. Theories of access take into account prices, rights, reciprocity networks, ability of residents to benefit from services, and other factors. The IHS provides health care services in urban and rural areas, but it may be that these health disparities are due to the rural nature of many reservations.

Background

Using network distances and drive times, we examined the accessibility of 71 American Indian Reservations to the nearest health services facilities equipped with screening and other preventive tools that treat some of the major diseases affecting American Indians. Washington state had both the highest number of reservations (28 reservations) and the most health care facilities (35 facilities). Only 7 facilities (XXX%) had cardiac programs. There were a total of 121 IHS health care facilities in the 9-state SURTCOM area. 59 reservations (83%) were closest to a nutrition program in their home states. For cardiac programs and diabetes programs the nearest facility is often in a different state. Mean distances and drive times were influenced by extreme outliers. For example, the Klamath Tribal headquarters is 724 miles from the nearest IHS cardiac program. The mean distance and drive time to nearest facility with a diabetes program was 47 miles and 54 minutes. The mean distance and drive time to nearest facility with a cardiac program was 202 miles and 218 minutes.

Conclusions/Discussion

The Small Urban Rural and Tribal Center of Mobility

EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The Healing Lodge, IHS facility, Spokane, WA

Figure 6: The Healing Lodge, IHS facility, Spokane, WA

Figure 5: Average drive times and distances to nearest facility from reservation per state

Figure 1: All Indian Health Service facilities located in and around the SURTCOM Study area

Facilities Managed by the Indian Health Service Located in and Around the SURTCOM States

IHS Facility

American Indian Reservation

Miles

Mean drive time

Mean drive time in minutes

# of nearest state

Mean time in (SD)

Distance in (SD)

State

4 3 120 (83) 118 (77) 0 148 (163) 159 (178) 0 32 (42) 37 (41)

South Dakota 1 3 102 (93) 105 (97) 0 148 (156) 151 (179) 0 1 (1) 3 (2)

North Dakota 1 2 59 (56) 70 (64) 0 328 (195) 325 (180) 3 70 (64) 75 (65)

Utah 5 3 195 (134) 189 (121) 0 137 (113) 141 (119) 0 71 (92) 71 (90)

Idaho 5 2 97 (113) 97 (103) 0 281 (130) 305 (132) 0 1 (1) 2 (2)

Colorado 2 2 41 (58) 47 (65) 0 130 (112) 136 (122) 1 0 (1) 2 (1)

Oregon 11 7 58 (56) 70 (64) 0 328 (195) 325 (180) 3 70 (64) 75 (65)

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References


