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Factors influencing the engagement of community health workers in breast cancer screening: Itaberaí Project

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Objective: The objective of this study was to evaluate the factors influencing the engagement of community health agents (CHW) in home visits for breast cancer screening, according to the actions of the Itaberaí Project. **Methodology:** This is a clinical trial, controlled, randomized, multicenter, phase III, where the observation unit was the CHW in their National Health Strategies (NHS). With randomization, CHW were randomly allocated into control group (CG) and intervention group (IG), where the intervention is the physical breast examination (PBE) performed by properly trained CHAs. The evaluation was conducted using a group technique, where CHW were previously encouraged to report challenges and facilitators in participating in the Itaberaí Project. Data were categorized by content approximation, evaluated, and compared between the groups. **Results:** Out of the 74 CHW active in the Project, 72 (91.1%) participated in this research, with 33 (45.8%) in the CG and 39 (54.2%) in the IG. In the CG, the most prevalent challenge was women's acceptance to participate in the Project, as reported by 33 CHW (100.0%), where the reasons were fears and taboos, delays in undergoing exams, and having health insurance, with 14 (42.4%), 13 (39.4%), and 6 (18.2%), respectively. The most common facilitators for executing the Project reported by CHW were helping others and saving lives 25 (75.8%), recognition and appreciation of CHW 23 (69.7%), and ongoing training 22 (66.7%). In the IG, the most prevalent challenge was women's resistance to receiving the PBE, while the least prevalent was CHW insecurity in performing the PBE. Among the facilitators, the most prevalent was prompt service 28 (70.0%). **Conclusion:** The factor that most influences the engagement of CHAs in carrying out the Itaberaí Project is "saving lives" or "helping others." However, they still encounter resistance from women due to fears and taboos regarding breast cancer.

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