

Student Name]

[Instructor's Name]

[Class Name]

Critical Evaluation

Introduction

The research work in question carries the title An Overview of Ohio's In-Home Service Program for Older People (PASSPORT) and it is written by Shahla Mehdizadeh and Robert Applebaum for the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University in May 2005. The nature of the evaluation question is exploratory since the research gives an overview of the PASSPORT project. The question is not labeled as such but the title of the research and the information contained within clearly suggest that the paper is guided in that direction. Of course the question might be better put as an evaluation of the success of the PASSPORT program but the research does not make too many comparisons between PASSPORT and other systems of providing medical assistance to older individuals.

Background

The program itself was started in 1984 therefore it is likely that other researchers have looked at the program in more than twenty years that have passed since its inception. However, other than the legal information which led to the creation of the PASSPORT program as a method of waiving federal government assistance for Medicaid funds, the authors do not provide any information about other studies which might have been conducted in the past. It does seem that such studies would have added to the validity of their own research but this short coming in the literature review can be overlooked since it appears that this document is a completely new evaluation of the PASSPORT system.

Measurements

The evaluations made cover a wide range of material which shows that the researchers did indeed study the situation deeply and the evaluation which they made of the program is backed with the data that they have used. It does not appear that other measures would have been more appropriate but it would be important for the readers to know what percentage of the total budget for Ohio is spent on the PASSPORT program since the researchers have already told the readers that Ohio has a significant senior citizen population.

Similarly, the researchers have pointed out that the cost of the program has increased from just over a hundred million dollars to more than two hundred and seventy five million dollars from 1995 to 2004. However, they have not clarified the exact reasons for the increase in the cost as to if it represents an increase in the number of senior citizens seeking help or if the increase has come from the administrative and management related costs associated with the program. These measures should be provided if an evaluation of the program is going to be complete since without these figures it is difficult to make an assessment of the viability and effectiveness of the program.

Design

Since the focus of the research is on giving an overview of the program, the design chosen by the writers is quite suitable. By giving information about the administrative structure, the way things are run, the individuals who receive the aid from the program and the individuals who provide services the overview becomes comprehensive enough for any reader who wants basic information about Ohio's PASSPORT.

Questions of external and internal validity as well as control variables do not really apply in this case since the project seems to be based more on the reporting of facts than the testing of an actual hypothesis. However, the information provided can be verified through external means as per the sources for data which were used by the authors. Verification from these sources could be used if the data given is doubted or needs corrections.

Data

The collection of data provided in the paper comes directly from the PASSPORT database which is used by the government for the compilation of figures and computation of costs. In this manner since the data is connected to the government of the state as well as the financial information maintained by state and federal bodies, the reliability of the

data as well as its collection should be of a high standard.

For an evaluation of this size, it might be very difficult if not inappropriate to investigate new data to verify government figures which are already following state and federal laws for the collection of statistical information and other datasets. The controls for keeping the quality of data collection were not mentioned but it is certain that government controls had been used when the data was first inserted into the PASSPORT database for later retrieval.

Results and Discussion

The most pointed fact which goes to show that PASSPORT has been successful as a program has been the number of care seekers who have moved off Medicaid and moved to PASSPORT. However, this may not speak as well of the PASSPORT program as it speaks negatively of the Medicaid system. It is possible that the consumers are merely choosing the lesser of the two evils but this possibility is not considered as an option and it might have been useful to compare similar programs which had been used in other states.

Working with the PASSPORT administrators could have also affected the biases of the writers in their ability to make an impartial evaluation but the hard data does support the idea that PASSPORT could be a better than the federal programs for supporting individuals who have medical assistance needs. However, the authors themselves did not put across any personal beliefs or political affiliations which could have affected their approach and certainly took the study with considerations from different viewpoints. Overall, the study seems quite useful and important for those who wish to take a brief overview of the PASSPORT program in Ohio.

Works Cited

Mehdizadeh, S. and Applebaum, R. 2005, An Overview of Ohio's In-Home Service Program for Older People (PASSPORT), Scripps Gerontology Center (Miami University).