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Community Health Workers are frontline public health workers who act as a bridge between their communities and the healthcare, as well as social service systems in which one resides. They improve patient quality of life by addressing non-medical issues that can influence an individual's ability to become healthy. The Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) were monitored and tracked for the inclusivity of the disabled and community health workers.

Research Question:

How are Local Health Agencies (departments and districts) using Community Health Workers to Perform Local Health Activities and Functions?

Methods:

Research was conducted by visiting the 62 local health department and districts websites in Connecticut. The following information was collected via web searches for each LHD: type of LHD, LHD contact info, CHW title of staff, and whether a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and/or Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was available. Follow-up phone calls were conducted with LHDs that did not have a staff directory publicly available. Additional information was also gathered from LHDs which received COVID-19 funding from the Connecticut Health Foundation to assess if CHWs hired during COVID-19 are currently employed.

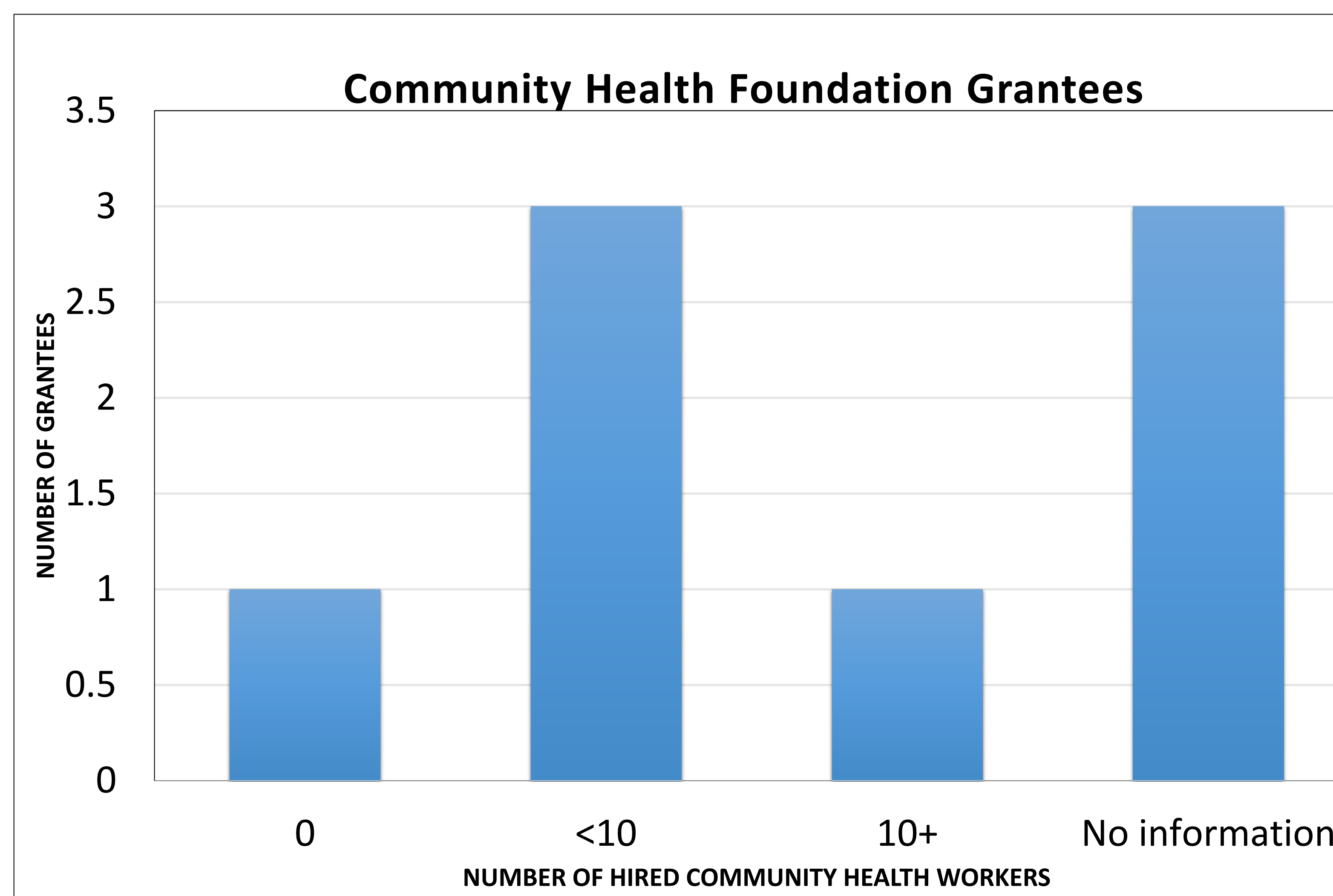
Results:

Table 1: Summary of CHA/CHIP documents, depicting # of Community Health Worker terms.

	Reviewed (n)	CHW Terms
CHA	8	0
CHIP	1	0
TOTAL	9	0



Figure 1: Community Health Foundation Grantees (n=8) and how many Community Health Workers have been hired.



Note: The Connecticut Health Foundation awarded \$1.5 million to LHDs and other agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic to support CHWs in the community (CHF, 2022).

Discussion

The staff directory on Local Health Agency websites were not easily found. Only 6 of the department/districts had tenured community health workers listed on their website, under the staff directory. Additionally, of the 9 CHA/CHIP documents that were analyzed, none of them included terms related to community health workers and the work that they do for others.

Conclusion and Next Steps

More research is needed to further investigate the role of CHWs in LHDs in CT. Additionally, when the CHA and CHIP are available, community health worker related information is not often included.

References:

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