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Diabetes Intervention Study Enters New Phase

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—Maria Macias

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Building on the foundation of its pilot study, Making the Connection Healthy Living Program is now being implemented on a larger scale in Southwest Chicago. The study promotes healthy eating and physical activity among Latinos and African Americans to reduce their risk of diabetes.

Three Spanish-speaking groups meet weekly at Edward N. Hurley Elementary, 3849 W. 69th Pl., and Latino Organization of the Southwest, 6400 S. Kedzie Ave. Enrolled in these study locations are 34 Latino adults from the neighborhood who are overweight but do not have diabetes. The program takes one year to complete, with eight weekly sessions to start, followed by eight semi-monthly sessions and six monthly meetings.

Two hundred Latinos and African American adults will be recruited for the study over the next year from the Chicago neighborhoods of Gage Park, West Lawn and Chicago Lawn. The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois is assisting with recruitment for the study by offering free screenings for diabetes and kidney disease at sites throughout the Greater Lawn community. IPRC is developing new partnerships with other schools,

churches, and community institutions to recruit participants and host program sites.

Maria Macias, one of 13 women meeting on Monday mornings at Hurley, learned about the study when picking up her grandchildren’s report cards at Hurley school.

“I knew it was important to learn more about diabetes and how I can prevent it,” said Ms. Macias, who has an aunt and a granddaughter with the disease.

Speaking through a translator, Ms. Macias said, “I’ve changed my eating habits little by little. I walk a lot now and try to drive less.” She explained that she leaves her car keys at home intentionally and has lost more than seven pounds.

“Now I can communicate to others what I’m learning and be an example,” said Ms. Macias.

Making the Connection Healthy Living Program adapts
(Continued on page 2)

SHAPE Walk Promotes Senior Health



More than 1,600 seniors participated in the eighth annual Senior Health Alliance Promoting Exercise (SHAPE) Walk held on May 30 at Chicago’s Soldier Field. The walk began with a ribbon cutting by Virginia McCaskey, owner of the Chicago Bears, and followed a three-mile route along the lakefront. Lunch, a health fair, and live music were included.



Making the Connection Healthy Living Program Coach Alejandra Cabrera (left) discusses food labeling with Maria Macias, study participant.

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(Continued from page 1)

the Diabetes Prevention Program's Lifestyle Intervention, an individual-centered and clinically delivered program that reduced diabetes in a national study, for use in community group settings by community members.

Laurie Ruggiero, professor of community health sciences, is the program's lead researcher.

In addition to promoting healthier food choices and increased physical activity, the Healthy Living Program provides group support and

teaches participants how to manage stress.

Ms. Macias says she has confidence that her new lifestyle will keep her healthy, and that she will keep the weight off because the program is not a quick fix. "This is life," she said.

Rural Latino Immigrants Want, Need Cardiovascular Disease Education

Latino immigrants living in rural Illinois communities lack knowledge about cardiovascular disease but are interested in educational programs, an IPRC researcher has found.

Last spring, Karen Peters, assistant professor of health policy and administration, along with colleagues from the UIC College of Medicine at Rockford, conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with recent Latino immigrants living in rural Illinois.

Among her findings, she learned that many participants were unsure of the difference between heart disease and stroke, and very few could define healthy blood pressure and cholesterol measurements.

Latinos face a higher risk for heart attack and stroke and are more likely to have high blood pressure than whites or blacks. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Latino immigrants in Illinois has more than doubled over the past 20 years. An estimated 75% of them were born in Mexico.

"The U.S. spends a great deal of money promoting messages about heart health, but clearly we aren't reaching this population," said Dr.

Peters. "There's very little peer-reviewed literature about new immigrants in rural places and how best to reach them."

Dr. Peters said an important finding from the research was learning of participants' interest in helping design programs that will improve their community's health. Participants emphasized the importance of using the Spanish language and understanding Latino culture and health priorities when designing interventions.

"We're excited to work with the communities and see what new ideas they come up with."

Dr. Peters and the Rockford researchers conducted six focus groups in different rural communities. Seventy adults attended the focus groups. The researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with two adults. The sessions were conducted in Spanish and translated into English.

The Rockford team included Benjamin Mueller, director of community outreach, Marcela Garces,

coordinator of community outreach, and Sergio Cristancho, assistant professor of research.

Dr. Peters collected this information as part of a larger study being conducted by the Cardiovascular Health Intervention Research and Translation Network (CHIRTN). The IPRC is one of six member organizations in the network, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Peters and the CHIRTN partners are developing short reports on the project findings, which they plan to share with the focus group communities as part of the community-based participatory action research methodology guiding the study.

Dr. Peters hopes that the findings will guide future collaboration with the communities as they partner on health interventions aimed at reducing the risk for cardiovascular disease among rural Latinos using this community-oriented approach.

"We're excited to work with the communities and see what new ideas they come up with," said Dr. Peters.

IPRC Activities and Partnerships

As part of the **Healthy Aging Research Network**, IPRC researcher Susan Hughes and colleagues have asked 700 providers of physical activity programs for seniors in Cook County to post information about their programs on a new website for seniors called AgeOptions. At www.AgeOptions.org, older adults and their families can connect with community-based resources and service options in suburban Cook County, and providers can post and update information about their programs. This website will replace the guide previously published by IPRC researchers, the *Get in SHAPE! Chicagoland Physical Activity Guide for Seniors*.

A new online evidence-based public health course will be available later this year. IPRC researcher William Baldyga has been working with Jason Rosthein at the **Center for Advanced Distance Education**, part of the UIC School of Public Health, to create a free online course for public health practitioners around the country. The course is designed to increase professionals' use of scientific evidence to make effective health policy and programmatic decisions. Course development was sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through the IPRC.

Eighth Annual Community Wellness Fair

Friday, November 2, 2007
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Marquette Park
6734 S. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, IL 60629

Offering screenings, physicals, immunizations, health education, workshops in English and Spanish, and family fun

Free and open to the public!

Sponsored by the UIC Illinois Prevention Research Center, the Latino Organization of the Southwest, and the Chicago Park District

For more information, contact Ofelia Sandoval, center coordinator, at (312)413-3379, or osand@uic.edu.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Meet Hector Rico of the Latino Organization of the Southwest

Since 1999, the IPRC has partnered with the Latino Organization of the Southwest (LOS), the only organization in southwest Chicago dedicated to serving Latinos. In their first collaboration, the partners raised awareness of diabetes in the community in the bilingual project ¡Sí Se Puede!, or Yes We Can! LOS now collaborates with IPRC on Making the Connection Healthy Living Program, a five-year study that aims to prevent diabetes among Latinos and African Americans, as well as an annual community wellness fair. HealthLines spoke with Hector Rico, co-founder and executive director of LOS, about the partnership.

What does the partnership with the university mean to the community and LOS?

It brings information and resources to the community. Working with the university has helped us to develop leadership among families, with community residents playing important roles in the project. LOS staff benefit from networking and making new contacts with educators. We have also increased our funding because the university (through faculty working in the IPRC) has offered us technical assistance when writing grants. For example, the Illinois Department of Public Health awarded us a grant for breast cancer and prostate cancer education.

How does LOS collaborate with the IPRC?

I chair the IPRC Community Advisory Board and its Community Committee. LOS advises the research team on community interactions and introduces them to other potential community partners. Several LOS staff members and volunteers have joined the

research team as coaches in Making the Connection. LOS and IPRC also work together to organize the wellness fair, an important resource to the community.

How has this work with the university influenced LOS?

It's been a learning process for both the researchers and for LOS. For me, I have more data about health conditions of the community. If it wasn't for the project, I wouldn't have thought health was such an important issue. Now I realize that it should definitely be one of the top priorities of our agency.

How would you advise a community-based organization considering a research collaboration with a university?

If there's an opportunity, take it. Make sure your organization plays a leadership role and that you are respected and recognized, like we are.



Hector Rico, co-founder and executive director of the Latino Organization of the Southwest, helps the IPRC raise awareness of diabetes in the Latino community.

Childhood Type 2 Diabetes More Common in Stressed Neighborhoods



Diana Grigsby-Toussaint found more children with type 2 diabetes in stressful communities.

Children living in Chicago's most stressful neighborhoods face a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, an IPRC researcher has found. Neighborhoods with the highest type 2 diabetes incidence rates in children had more African American residents, higher unemployment rates, higher poverty rates, and more reports of violent crime compared to the rest of Chicago, according to Diana Grigsby-Toussaint.

Among adults, type 2 diabetes accounts for 90% to 95% of all diabetes diagnoses and is associated with inactivity, obesity, and family history. Although rare in youth, type 2 diabetes is being diagnosed more frequently in the United States, particularly among racial minorities.

Grigsby-Toussaint conducted this research as a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Prevention Research Center Minority Fellow and doctoral candidate in maternal and child health epidemiology.

Grigsby-Toussaint examined records in a city-wide registry of 1,252 Chicago children ages 0-17 who were diagnosed with type 1 and type 2 diabetes between 1994 and 2003. There were 487 children identified as having type 2 diabetes. She then used U.S. census information and police reports to characterize the neighborhoods of these youth throughout Chicago.

The observed differences in childhood type 2 diabetes among the neighborhoods may be due to social and environmental risk factors, Grigsby-Toussaint said. Information about the occurrence of diabetes in various communities may lead to better understanding of the development of diabetes in children.

"Our research provides insight into how where children live can potentially influence behaviors that lead to chronic diseases," said Grigsby-Toussaint, who is working with Laurie Ruggiero, professor of community

health sciences, also an IPRC researcher.

Grigsby-Toussaint is excited about the implications of the study and hopes that the association between neighborhood characteristics and diabetes incidence rates will influence health promotion strategies. "Our results may change the way we think about interventions: targeting the community as well as individual behavior," she said.

Grigsby-Toussaint plans to submit her findings for publication. She presented a poster of her work at meetings last spring, including the Population Association of America annual meeting, where she won an award.

Future research may include examining diabetes incidence rates by smaller neighborhood units such as census tracts and looking at a broader set of individual and community characteristics.

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Our Mission

To reduce disparities in health by studying approaches to promote healthful behaviors and prevent disease across the lifespan; to conduct this research in partnership with communities across Illinois; to share findings and best practices locally and nationally; and to improve the practice of public health through training and education.

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