Proposal Title – Facilitators and Barriers to Healthy Living in Oregon: Perspectives from American Indian and Latino Adults
PI – Carolyn A. Mendez-Luck; Co-Is – Jeffrey Bethel and R. Turner Goins
Department – Human Development and Family Sciences/Health Management and Policy
College – Public Health and Human Sciences
Award Information – General Research Fund, January 1, 2012, $9,990

Final Project Report

Summary of Goals

Oregon has begun to address the issue of inequity in health. The Oregon Health Authority and the Department of Human Services collaborated on a recent report documenting the state of equity in health among all Oregonians. The report found disparities in Latino and American Indian populations on multiple key performance measures of health. However, research is lacking on the social contexts in which Latinos and American Indians live and how those social contexts influence community-level health. In response, we conducted a qualitative pilot study to identify the prominent health-related issues in three Oregon communities in terms of their socio-cultural contexts and to examine the factors that key informants in those communities perceived as enabling or inhibiting healthy lifestyles of community residents.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the prominent health-related issues in two Oregon Latino communities (located in Multnomah and Marion Counties) and one Oregon American Indian community (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), in terms of their socio-cultural contexts.
2. Examine the factors that key informants in each community perceive as enabling or inhibiting healthy lifestyles of community residents.
3. Increase awareness in the Latino communities in Multnomah and Marin Counties and the American Indian community of the Umatilla Reservation of the factors that enable and inhibit the health of their residents.

Summary of Scholarly Work Performed

This study used a grounded theory approach to qualitatively explore Latino and American Indian adults’ views on what it means to be healthy and which aspects of their community support and impede healthy living. We developed a semi-structured interview guide that addressed Objectives 1 and 2. We enrolled 26 key informants from the three communities of interest, Multnomah County (10), Marion County (7), and Umatilla Indian Reservation (9). Study participants were recruited through word-of-mouth and personal referrals. Participation included a one-time 40-60 minute interview administered either in-person or via telephone. Interviews were audio recorded. Key informants received an OSU umbrella for their participation. The audio-tapes of the interviews were professionally transcribed and analyzed using Atlas.ti qualitative software to organize the textual data and interpret thematic patterns. We engaged in a number of activities to achieve Objective 3. We reported our findings in two
community presentations and presented posters at the OSU Celebration of Undergraduate Excellence and at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting. The project received approval from the OSU Institutional Review Board, the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center Health Commission, and the Portland Area Indian Health Board’s Institutional Review Board. The main activities performed in this study were as follows:

- In-person and telephone outreach and recruitment meetings in the three communities
- Preparation of IRB applications
- Development of study protocols, outreach materials, and data collection instruments
- Collection of data from telephone and in-person interviews
- Hiring of personnel to assist with data collection and analyses
- Data entry, management, and analyses
- Miscellaneous administrative activities, including purchasing supplies and incentives, setting up transcription vendor, and preparing travel reimbursement forms
- Reporting back to communities in two separate presentations
- Preparation of peer-review manuscript draft with expected submission date of 11/1/13

At the end of this report is an appendix containing the community reports, peer-review manuscript draft, and posters produced as a result of this scholarly work.

Summary of Additional Scholarly Activities

As newly arrived faculty at the time of the award, the GRF-funded project provided a timely opportunity for us to become acquainted with the Oregon landscape. Specifically, the project was a vehicle for us to gain entrée into local communities by developing relationships with community-based organizations and interacting with community residents. Below we describe the additional scholarly activities that occurred as a result of our GRF-funded project.

C. Mendez-Luck: This project resulted in Dr. Mendez-Luck identifying two community partners to assist in recruitment and outreach for an externally funded project examining diabetes management in Latino caregiving dyads. These two community partners have a respected and established presence in the local Latino community in Multnomah County. Consequently, the community partners helped us to successfully conduct two focus groups presenting the diabetes intervention to community residents and referred more than 10 potential dyads for participation in the diabetes intervention itself. The project also allowed an undergraduate student to compete for and be accepted into the OSU Undergraduate Research Award Program. The student’s URAP project was to conduct part of the data analysis for the GRF project.

J. Bethel: This project resulted in Dr. Bethel identifying a community partner to assist in a funded project examining heat-related illness among farmworkers. Specifically, the agency of one of the interviewee’s agreed to assist Dr. Bethel in recruiting study participants in conjunction with its yearly education and outreach efforts to housing camps in Oregon.
R.T. Goins: The GRF project was carried out in concert with another funded project with the same American Indian community. This particular project yielded relevant contextual information that complemented the other project. The results will be used by the community’s health clinic in their re-certification due this fall and in future grant applications.

Expenditures of Funds

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*Encumbrance to be processed on 9/30/13.

External Funding Requests as a Result of Funding

None to date