Brotherhood is a term for a close-knit system of support and friendship among men. In Spanish, this is known as hermandad.

For three Latino men fighting to survive prostate cancer, hermandad was a unifying force that helped them through the most difficult challenge of their lives—and it wouldn't have been possible without the innovative patient navigation project from Redes En Acción: The National Latino Cancer Research Network, which is headquartered at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio and funded by NCI.

Guadalupe Ortiz Valadez, age 61.
Roman Mejia Hernandez, age 57.
Francisco Lopez, age 58.

Each man has a different life story, background, and struggle with cancer. But their differences dissolved when a Redes patient navigator, Guadalupe Cornejo, helped bring them all together. Cornejo arranged a phone call so that Lopez could offer his support and advice to Valadez. Then, at the request of Hernandez’ daughter, Cornejo arranged for Valadez to give similar support to Hernandez. The three men immediately started learning from each other. They found comfort being able to confide in someone who shares the same experience of fears, questions and uncertainties of prostate cancer.

The trio began talking more frequently over time. They talked about the barriers they have faced: language, little or distant family support, and no health insurance.

Valadez said that, while he didn't encounter many major challenges thanks to the support of his wife and children, the toughest part was telling his children about his cancer diagnosis and the unknowns of surgery. He envisions—thanks in part to the support system he established with Hernandez and Lopez—being able to help educate others about cancer and survivorship.

Lopez said he was also blessed to have his family being by his side from diagnosis to full recovery. But with no health insurance, he initially hesitated to seek medical care until he felt too ill not to. It was his daughter that encouraged him to seek care at a clinic that took care of all his health needs. He was faced with the diagnosis of prostate cancer, diabetes and arthritis all at once. Coming from poverty, has given him compassion for others in need and is willing to give wholeheartedly to others.

Hernandez, who also had no insurance when diagnosed with prostate cancer, said he only had a...
Director’s Corner
From IHPR Director Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez

The health of Latinos is paramount for our nation’s future. Indeed, as the Latino population is expected to rise from 16% to 30% by 2050, there also is a projected 99% increase in the number of invasive cancer cases among minorities, with a 142% increase among Hispanics specifically.

I helped raise awareness of Latino health on a panel—alongside Dr. Elena Rios of the National Hispanic Medical Foundation and Rosa Villoch-Santiago of the American Cancer Society’s South Atlantic Division—for Minority Health Month this past April.

Read a recap of the panel by Saludify here.

I discussed Latino cancer issues and steps we can take at various levels to reduce the burden for this population as time goes on.

For example, more research is needed. See some of our work here.

Prevention also is key.

Latinos can reduce their risk through exercise and a balanced diet rich in fresh foods and limited in processed products.

If everyone works together, we can make a difference.

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez
Director, IHPR

IHPR Staff Profile: Shannon Baldwin

Shannon Baldwin grew up playing sports and eating a balanced diet—her mother made plenty of salads but allowed special treats, too, like Sundae Sunday.

In middle school, she wrote a play about a junk-food-fighting superhero.

So even though “science” wasn’t on her career radar, Baldwin became intrigued about public health when she heard Laura Esparza, a researcher at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR), give a presentation about a research project to increase Latina teen girls’ physical activity through a unique exercise and social media campaign.

Baldwin contacted Esparza to get involved—and soon Baldwin became an intern helping take measures and administer surveys to project participants.

“I was so energized by actually getting to be with the girls, getting to see them firsthand as they used cameras to document physical activity barriers in their communities,” Baldwin said. “Instead of just reading about health disparities, we were actually going out and doing something about it. I was hooked.”

Baldwin now works full-time at the IHPR as a research curator for Salud America! The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children.

In her role as curator, she:

• scouts the Internet to collect news, policies, programs, and research from across the nation that relates to reducing Latino childhood obesity;
• repurposes this content for users to view and learn from;
• writes stories about people who are making healthy changes in communities; and
• helps populate the IHPR’s social media campaign, SaludToday.

She said she enjoys writing stories and helping Rick Carrillo, Salud America! TV producer, turn the stories into thought-provoking videos.

“We hope these videos will inspire people in the Latino community to go make their own healthy changes,” Baldwin said.

After all, she knows that health is very important for everyone.

“I truly believe that good health is precious and that we all should have the tools we need to take care of our bodies,” Baldwin said. “I enjoy being able to celebrate folks who make healthy, lasting changes and also to hopefully encourage others through my work to see why healthy living is so important.”

Fun Facts

Hometown: Houston, Texas
Family: Mom; dad; step-mom; brother
Hobbies: Exercising (crossfit, running, yoga), cooking, writing, petting other people’s dogs
Favorite food(s): Pizza, ice cream, fajitas (although these are “sometimes” foods)
Favorite movie(s): Peter Pan, Legally Blonde, Midnight in Paris
Favorite book(s): Traveling Mercies by Anne Lamott

Latino Prostate Cancer Survivors Connect, Bond Thanks to Navigator

Continued from Page 1

brother to lean on during his treatments. Speaking only Spanish also kept him from communicating effectively with his physician. He was very grateful for the opportunity to get to know Valadez and Hernandez, and said their friendship helped him persevere.

The three Latino men talked on the phone so much they believed they had grown a “spiritual bond.” Each man cited this bond and the Redes patient navigator project and instrumental in helping them achieve cancer survival.

The Redes National Study Coordinator, Sandra San Miguel, recently brought them together in person for the first time.

With hugs and smiles exchanged, Valadez, Lopez, and Hernandez thanked each other for their support and made a vow: help other prostate cancer patients support and educate each other about the cancer journey to help them hurdle some of the same challenges they faced and embark on a new journey filled with support, friendship, wellness, and a positive outlook on life.

In other words: let’s spread hermandad.
New Research Highlights Ways to Tackle Latino Childhood Obesity

Six new packages of research materials are being released this summer to highlight strategies to address obesity among Latino children.

The research packages are from Salud America!, a national network of stakeholders seeking environmental and policy solutions to Latino obesity based at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

The packages focus on the following six topics:
- Healthier School Snacks, May 2013
- Better Food in the Neighborhood, June 2013
- Active Spaces, July 2013
- Active Play, July 2013
- Healthier Marketing, August 2013
- Sugary Drinks, September 2013

Each package will include a research, an issue brief, an animated video narrated by Latino children, and an infographic. Find each package at www.salud-america.org.

“We believe researchers, decision-makers, community leaders, school officials, parents and even children can use these research materials to learn about the problems related to Latino childhood obesity, and what can be done about them,” said Amelie G. Ramirez, director of Salud America! and the IHPR.

Salud America! is developing research packages on the following six topics:
- Healthier School Snacks
- Better Food in the Neighborhood
- Active Spaces
- Active Play
- Healthier Marketing
- Sugary Drinks

IHPR Presentations

Publications

Presentations

IHPR Employees Take Fitness, Healthy Eating Challenge

Exercising and eating right can help control your weight. It also can also reduce your risk for diabetes, diseases and some cancers.

That’s why, for National Employee Wellness Month in June 2013, employees at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio started taking steps toward health.

IHPR employees participated in a pedometer and nutrition contests.

Jessica Alcaraz, an administrative assistant, won the pedometer contest, which challenged employees to track their number of steps and then increase them as much as possible.

Alcaraz took 60,000 steps in one week. “Before this, I thought I was taking enough steps throughout the day. But using the pedometer motivated me to take even more steps and get moving more,” she said.

The nutrition contest, which had employees track their fruit and vegetable consumption for five days and earn one point per serving, had Ogden had 42 points—an average of more than eight servings a day.

“Eating more than the recommended 5-a-day gave me more energy for the entire week and I felt great,” she said.

For Ogden, like Alcaraz, the change isn’t temporary—she plans the night before to make sure that she’ll eat enough fruits and vegetables the next day.

“I prepare salads and fruit containers the night before and put everything in the refrigerator for the next day,” she said. “It removes the excuses such as, ‘Being too rushed in the morning.’”

IHPR News Briefs

IHPR Faculty Members Earn Honors

Dr. Alan Holden, an IHPR assistant professor, recently marked 30 years of service at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. Holden has vast experience in behavioral science, health promotion, epidemiology, which has been applied to study planning, research design, database management and data analysis.

Sandra San Miguel, a research instructor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research and The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, recently earned the university’s Dr. Margaret (Sue) Keir Hoppe Award in Research Ethics. San Miguel received a cash price accompanying the award, which goes to the faculty, post-doc, resident, staff member or student submitting the most meritorious 1,500-word composition on research ethics.

IHPR Staff Members Earn Advanced Degrees

Becky Vega, an IHPR accountant, received a master’s degree in business administration from Webster University.

Guadalupe Cornejo, an IHPR community educator and navigator, became a registered dental assistant at Concorde Career College.

Sandra San Miguel

IHPR student associates Ramon Ramirez and Celestina Hernandez both graduated from The University of Texas at San Antonio, Ramirez with a bachelor’s degree in community health and Hernandez with a bachelor’s degree in kinesiology.

Ruth Morris, an IHPR student associate who worked on Dr. Daniel Hughes’ exercise research projects doing data entry, literature reviews, and manuscript and abstract preparation, was accepted into the PhD in Translational Science program at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

SaludToday Wins Web Health Awards for Raising Awareness of Latino Health

Spreading the word about how to improve Latino health is a dire need. That’s why we at the IHPR created our SaludToday blog and social media campaign. We recently won a trio of Web Health Awards for our digital efforts to raise awareness for Latino health from the Health Information Resource Center, which gives awards twice annually for online health information. We earned a “silver” award for our SaludToday blog and a “bronze” for our Twitter feed. We also earned a “merit” award for our quarterly e-newsletter on Latino health. Please help us spread continue to raise awareness of Latino health issues and solutions by following us on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.
Èxito! Program Helps Latinos Seek Doctoral Degrees, Research Careers

Èxito! Grad: Helen Palomino
Brawley, California

Helen Palomino didn’t go straight into a doctoral degree program after earning her master’s degree in social work from San Diego State University in 2008.

She had a good reason for postponing her doctoral aspirations.

Palomino instead focused on helping her children achieve their college degrees while also establishing her career in the field of clinical social work.

She continues to work as a medical social worker at the Cancer Resource Center of the Desert, a nonprofit organization in California where she provides social services and resources to individuals who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Each day, Palomino is faced with the uncertainty cancer brings to her patients, and she leans on her faith to give her the energy to deal with traumatic situations.

She knows that her ability to work one-on-one with cancer patients gives her the proper perspective and skills to become a skilled cancer health disparities researcher, and her desire to pursue a doctoral degree stems from wanting to better interact with and advocate for the people she serves.

Seeking direction on how to pursue a doctoral degree, Èxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training, which aims to increase research in Latino cancer disparities by encouraging master’s-level students or health professionals to pursue a doctoral degree and a career studying how cancer affects Latinos differently. The program offers a five-day summer institute and internships. Read more here.

Èxito! Grad: Carla Rosales
Kenner, Louisiana

Carla Rosales found herself essentially on her own in a new city in New Orleans, not knowing anyone, not knowing much about the college process and little financial aid.

But with her supportive parents in her native Honduras and her family’s faith and culture, she overcame many hurdles and doubts to move to New Orleans in 2006—a year after Hurricane Katrina—and reach her higher education goals.

Rosales earned her bachelor’s degree and worked as a research assistant at the University of New Orleans, where she helped conduct research based on identification and characterization of enzymes involved in biosynthesis of different phycobiliproteins in cyanobacteria.

Her rise, which coincided with the rise of post-Katrina New Orleans, continued as she transferred to the Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Science Center’s School of Public Health, where she is working on a master’s degree in public health (epidemiology).

Rosales also is a research coordinator at the LSU Health Science Center School of Public Research, which she works on the Louisiana Gulf Women’s Health Study and the Women and Their Children’s Health Study.

Seeking new knowledge on how to pursue a doctoral degree, Rosales applied for Èxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training, which aims to increase research in Latino cancer disparities by encouraging master’s-level students and health professionals to pursue a doctoral degree and a cancer research career.

By the end of the program, Palomino said the path was clearer.

“[The] Èxito! Summer Institute provided me the insight and clarity for taking the next steps in pursuing a PhD program,” she said.
San Antonio Reports Significant Drop in Obesity Rates

In just two years, obesity rates in San Antonio and Bexar County dropped from 35.1% in 2010 to 28.5% in 2012 on the heels of new health and fitness initiatives across the city, said San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro at a press conference July 31, 2013.

The city now has a lower rate of obesity than the current Texas average (29.3%).

“We now have evidence that our investments are paying off and positively impacting the health of our families and the overall quality of life in San Antonio,” Castro said.

Overall, 70,000 adults in Bexar County moved into a healthier weight category.

Obesity rates also declined among local racial/ethnic minority populations, including Latinos, which saw a drop in obesity from 40.5% to 29.6%—but the decline was even greater among those with higher incomes and more education, said Dr. Thomas Schlenker, director of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health).

“We have a special work to do with those who are less educated and those of lower income,” Schlenker said. “That’s where we need to invest the most going forward.”

The new statistics comes from survey data collected before and after the city received a federal Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant.

In 2010, Metro Health received a $15.6 million CPPW obesity prevention grant that allowed it to partner with organizations such as the Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works, the Office of Sustainability and the Mayor’s Fitness Council, the Bexar County Health Collaborative, San Antonio Housing Authority, YMCA of Greater San Antonio, San Antonio Sports, the University of Texas at San Antonio, the University of Texas School of Public Health, and local school districts, to develop and implement many strategies and programs for reducing obesity.

CPPW initiatives include the open-streets event called Síclovía, 108 salad bars in schools, ride-to-own bikes, Fitness in the Park classes, the Fit Family Challenge, menu labeling, and shared use agreements to open more recreational facilities to the public.

Shared use agreements and access to playgrounds are increasingly seen as key to fighting childhood obesity, according to a report in the San Antonio Express-News, which features research led by Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director of Salud America!, a national Latino childhood obesity research network headquartered at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Still, there is more work to be done.

The latest statistics also show that the percentage of local adults who were overweight, but not obese, rose from 34% in 2010 to 36% in 2012.

“We’re going to take San Antonio from one of the fattest cities to one of the fittest cities,” Castro said. Go here for more information.

Latina Girl Sticks it to Pediatric Cancer with Bandage Design

Laura Vargas is a cancer survivor.

The 10-year-old Latina girl from San Antonio battled acute lymphoblastic leukemia but is now in remission—and is helping brighten the day for other kids who have cancer, according to a San Antonio Express-News story.

Vargas entered an “Ouchies for Others” contest from Ouchies Adhesive Bandages that asked kids to design a bandage to be featured in a new line of Ouchies bandages called “Fight Against Pediatric Cancer.” Profits from these bandage sales go to children’s cancer organizations.

Vargas and four other children’s designs were chosen as winners.

Vargas’ entry features a nurse and two children surrounded by the slogans DON’T LET CANCER KNOCK U OUT and DON’T GIVE UP “BE HAPPY.”

“I wanted to do this because I had cancer myself so I wanted other kids not to let themselves down and show them that you can have fun during cancer treatment and never give your hopes up and look cool with my bandage,” she said.

According to the Express-News, the company is producing more than 10,000 tins of bandages containing the five winning entries. Each tin will sell for $5 online at ouchiesonline.com or $5 to $7 in select stores.

Profits will go toward The Childhood Leukemia Foundation and The American Childhood Cancer Organization.
Study: HPV Vaccine Reduces Teen Infections; Latino Teens Have Low Vaccine Rates

The HPV vaccine cut the rate of infections of strains of the human papillomavirus, which causes nearly all cervical cancers, by 56% in teens and young adults, according to a new study in the Journal of Infectious Disease, NBC Latino reports.

The finding has special relevance for Latinas, who have the highest rates of HPV-associated cervical cancer.

Dr. Deborah Parra-Medina, professor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, told NBC Latino that the study was “good news” but that work continues to be needed to promote the vaccine and its three-dose series to prevent cervical cancer among Latinos.

She said only 40% of girls in the predominantly Latino region of South Texas receive the vaccine, falling far short of the federal goal of 80% vaccination:

“We are falling short of the national goal because of lack of access and care, as well as misinformation concerning the vaccine,” notes Dr. Parra-Medina, who runs a community health program in the lower Rio Grande Valley to teach women about cervical cancer prevention through the HPV vaccine. “But it’s important for parents to know that the vaccine is the primary means of preventing HPV. The only way it will work is if we immunize before there’s any chance that the child has had exposure — that’s why we are recommending it as early as eleven.”

And there are appropriate ways for parents to discuss HPV prevention with their child, says Dr. Parra-Medina, noting that many parents shy away from discussing sexually transmitted infections with pre-teens and young children.

Try explaining that the vaccine will help prevent them from getting a disease in the future that can cause cancer, she suggests, and end the conversation with “It’s important that I protect you from that risk.”

“Depending on the child’s maturity level and interest, you can get more detailed over time,” says Dr. Parra-Medina.

Please see our Spanish video on why Latinas should consider getting the HPV vaccine.
Hispanic High School Graduates Pass Whites in Rate of College Enrollment

A record 69% of Hispanic high school graduates in the class of 2012 enrolled in college that fall, two percentage points higher than the rate (67%) among their white counterparts, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of new data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Hispanic college-going has increased since 2008.

White college-going has decreased over that same span.

But the new isn’t all good.

According to the report: “Hispanic college students are less likely than their white counterparts to enroll in a four-year college (56% versus 72%), they are less likely to attend a selective college, less likely to be enrolled in college full time, and less likely to complete a bachelor’s degree.”

Why the trend?

The report speculates that higher unemployment among Latinos ages 16-24 may have led that population segment to make college a more viable choice or to stay in school longer.

It also speculates that Latino families place higher value on college education, with one survey even showing that 88% of Latinos ages 16 and older agreed that college is needed to “get ahead in life,” compared with just 74% of whites who thought the same.

Latino News Tweets

Follow the IHPR’s Twitter feed, @SaludToday for all the latest news in Latino health, like:

Healthy Lifestyles
► Are ‘Depressed’ Latinas at Higher Risk for Diabetes?
► Study: Diabetes Heightens Risk of Dementia, Memory Loss for Latinos

Care Issues
► Proper Training of Latin American Nurses in Latin America Could Improve Border Care
► Who’s Taking Care of Viejitos?

► Why Do Hispanics, Blacks Receive Poorer Health Care?

Demographics
► U.S. Latinos Outlive Whites Despite Less Insurance, More Poverty
► Profile: The Rise of Mexican-Origin Hispanics in the U.S.
► Tapping the STEM Potential of Latinos
► Good News: Hispanic-Serving Institution Tally Increases 14.5%
► Report: Hispanics Still Underrepresented in Medical School
► Large Decrease in Teen Births in Nearly all U.S. States
Increasing HIV Testing among Gay and Bisexual Latino Men

Latinos account for 21% of all new HIV infections in the United States, and Latino gay and bisexual men bear the greatest burden of HIV infection.

A new bilingual campaign encouraged HIV testing among Latino gay and bisexual men.

The campaign, called REASONS/RAZONES and developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), offers a website and Facebook page with information on HIV, how to get tested, and how to take action.

The campaign also features bilingual videos in English and Spanish that show Latino gay and bisexual men sharing their reasons for getting an HIV test, which is fast, free, and confidential.

Find a nearby test site by texting your zip code to KNOW IT (566948).

Tips from Latino Ex-Smokers

Mariano, a Hispanic living in Illinois, started smoking at 15.

At age 47, Mariano woke up one morning feeling sick and dizzy. He was sweating a lot.

He went to the doctor, who told him his blood pressure was extremely high. He was hospitalized that day.

Three days later, he had open heart surgery to replace blocked blood vessels in his heart.

“I smoked my last cigarette the day I was told I needed heart surgery,” he said. He hasn’t smoked since. “I was given a second chance to live.”

Mariano, who loves to cook and noticed that he has more energy since he quit smoking, is part of a new effort from the CDC and the National Latino Tobacco Control Network (NLTCN) to raise awareness among Latinos about the dangers of tobacco use and second-hand smoke.

The campaign, Tips from Smokers, features real-life stories from ex-smokers like Mariano.

Read more about Mariano here or watch his video in Spanish.

Latino Resource Tweets

Resources

Follow the IHPR’s Twitter feed, @SaludToday for all the latest resources in Latino health, like:

- Bilingual Campaign: Why Latino Kids Should Wear Sunscreen
- Spanish Campaign: Rethink Your Drink
- Spanish Resource: Building a Cancer-Fighting Meal
- Spanish Resource: Reduce Your Diabetes Risk
- Spanish Resource: Quit-Smoking Hotline in New Mexico
- Campaign: Educating Hispanics on Breast, Colorectal Cancer
- Infographic: 12 Cancer Resources for U.S. Latinos

Funding

Grant Roundup

The following organizations have open research funding opportunities or lists:

- The U.S. Office of Minority Health
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure
- AACR
- NIH Obesity Grants
- NCCOR Obesity Grants

Ongoing Events

Seminars in Translational Research

Seminars in Translational Research (STRech) unite investigators from The UT Health Science Center and UTSA in basic, clinical and social sciences to highlight the stages of the scientific translation of research discoveries.

CancerCare Workshops

CancerCare, in partnership with Redes En Acción, which is led by the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, will offer free workshops on a variety of issues. Register here.
Video Roundup – Click on the images below to view the video for each.

- **How Cancer Research Saves Lives**
- **Promotores Help Latino Seniors Manage Diabetes**
- **Hispanic Kids Exposed to Unhealthy Food Ads on TV**
- **Texas School District Improves Students’ Physical Activity**
- **Spanish: Latinas Get Healthy through Dance**
- **Latino Couple Supports Each Other’s Weight-Loss Goals**
- **English: What Medicines Are Safe for Moms-to-Be?**
- **Spanish: What Medicines Are Safe for Moms-to-Be?**

About the E-newsletter

This E-newsletter is produced quarterly by the Institute for Health Promotion Research. Please send news items or story ideas to IHPR@uthscsa.edu.

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