Research Finds Promising Approaches to Prevent Latino Childhood Obesity

Guided grocery store trips, menu labeling at restaurants, community gardens, and video-game-based exercise programs are among several promising, culturally appropriate ways to prevent obesity among Latino children, according to new studies from Salud America! The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children published in a supplement to the March issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Salud America!, based at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, is a national network of researchers, advocates, and policymakers established in 2007 seeking solutions to Latino childhood obesity. The supplement focuses on Salud America! achievements in its first five years and features 19 papers of groundbreaking research on effective approaches for preventing/controlling Latino childhood obesity.

Papers highlight Latino culture, health, and policies in communities across the nation. Findings include:

• Education on nutritious food selection and a guided grocery store trip decreased the total number of calories per dollar spent, challenging the idea that buying healthy foods costs more

• Owners of small restaurants can improve access to healthy menu options and continue to publish calorie information on their menus

• Tending community gardens or attending nutrition/cooking workshops improved or maintained children’s body mass indices and increased the presence of fruits and vegetables in the home

• School educators can use active video games to increase cardiorespiratory endurance and math scores over time among students.

Medical and political leaders — such as San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro and the California Endowment’s George Flores — also weigh in on the

Continued on Page 6 ▶

IHPR News

Find Us Online

Join IHPR Research Networks

The IHPR directs Rédes En Acción on Latino Cancer and Salud America! on Latino childhood obesity.

Share Your News

Send news, story ideas or comments to IHPR@uthscsa.edu.

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) investigates the causes and solutions to the unequal impact of cancer and other chronic diseases among the populations of South Texas, Texas, and the nation. The IHPR, part of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, is supported in part by the Health Science Center and its Cancer Therapy & Research Center and Regional Academic Health Center. Visit the IHPR online at IHPR.uthscsa.edu or call 210-562-6500.
**Director’s Corner**

From IHPR Director

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez

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**IHPR Staff Profile: Rick Carrillo**

In the movie The Killing Strain, Rick Carrillo plays a soldier who escapes a helicopter crash to lead a small group of flu-epidemic survivors to safety.

On screen, he was a tough, nothing-can-stop-him hero.

Off screen, though, Carrillo struggled fighting the elements — mountain cedar had him blowing his nose, taking antihistamines and using his inhaler between takes.

“I wasn’t feeling 100%, but the scenes captured during filming were very effective in telling the story of this gutsy soldier,” Carrillo said. “This always reminds me the great power a camera has on creating a world for audiences to absorb and be part of.”

Today, Carrillo is putting his acting and film-making experience to work as a TV producer/director for the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Carrillo has always loved movies and enjoyed acting (his mom used to say, though, he was better at acting up than acting).

After high school, he tried majoring in theatre. But he ended up getting a more practical degree instead. Nuclear medicine seems like a 360-degree shift from acting, but having a steady hospital job as a technologist and interventional radiology operations manager allowed him participate in bilingual TV commercials, public service announcements, voiceovers, print ads, etc.

Carrillo eventually ingrained himself in the San Antonio film community and became fascinated with the production process of movie-making.

He started developing narrative films promoting health and wellness as a contractor for the video department at the UT Health Science Center. His videos focused on diabetes education, geriatric fall prevention, sex education and more.

One video used a continuous-shot format to follow a nursing student through a simulation lab. He scripted all the action choreography.

“I was able to incorporate unique learning objectives through different mediums and concepts for different video productions,” Carrillo said.

At the IHPR, he currently produces on-camera and animated videos — scripting, concept design, production and more — for Salud America!, a national network dedicated to reducing and preventing Latino childhood obesity.

Carrillo said he likes knowing that the materials he helps create can help teach children and families to live healthier.

“I enjoy the opportunity to contribute to a genuine and purposeful cause that impacts so many human beings via a creative environment that allows me to try new methods of media production to disseminate information,” he said.

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**Fun Facts**

**Hometown:** Weslaco, Texas

**Family:** Fiancée, step daughter, older sister, parents

**Hobbies:** Movies, racquetball, traveling, writing, party planning

**Favorite food(s):** Pizza

**Favorite movie:** The Prestige

**Favorite book(s):** The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury

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To improve Latinas’ physical activity, the Enlace study, led by IHPR researcher Dr. Deborah Parra-Medina, will use promotoras — trained community health workers — to lead culturally appropriate group education and exercise sessions for Latinas in community centers in South Texas’ Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Participants also will get newsletters and telephone counseling.

This Enlace intervention, funded by the National Institute of Health, will launch in January 2014.

Currently, the Enlace project team, including IHPR researchers Dr. Daisy Morales-Campos and Edna Villarreal, is training Valley-based promotoras on social determinants of health and conducting community meetings.

Promotoras also are recruiting Latinas to partake in two community meetings at each of eight local centers from March to May 2013 to determine community health issues, such as obesity, safety, transportation, etc., and identify available resources and services.

Please stay tuned to see our progress in impacting Latina health!

**Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez**

Director, IHPR
Latinas who have an abnormal mammogram result take 33 days longer to reach definitive diagnosis of breast cancer than non-Hispanic white women, which threatens their lives, according to a new study by the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Such a time delay can have a critical impact on tumor size, stage at diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, and survival of subsequent breast cancer.

For this study, published in SpringerPlus, IHPR researchers worked with partners in the federally funded Redes En Acción: The National Latino Cancer Network to evaluate the differences in time to diagnosis of breast cancer among 186 Latinas and 74 non-Hispanic whites who received an abnormal mammogram result in six U.S. cities.

Analysis showed that Latinas’ median time to definitive diagnosis of breast cancer was 60 days, compared to just 27 days for non-Hispanic white women.

“This long delay puts Latinas at greater risk of being diagnosed with larger tumors and more advanced-stage breast cancer, which can affect prognosis,” said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, the study’s corresponding author and director of the IHPR.

Given this delay and that cancer now is the leading cause of Latino death, this study also signals a greater need for ethnically and culturally appropriate interventions to facilitate Latinas’ successful entry into, and progression through, the cancer care system, Dr. Ramirez said.

Dr. Ramirez’ team recently found that extra support for patients, called “patient navigation,” can lead to faster diagnosis for Latinas after an abnormal mammogram result.

In that study, published in Cancer, women who received help from trained patient navigators had significantly shorter time delays between an abnormal mammogram and definitive diagnosis — whether positive or negative for breast cancer — than those who did not receive navigation. Services provided by navigators included culturally-sensitive support and help overcoming barriers related to transportation, child care, insurance, language and more.

“We’ve found that Latinas experience delays to diagnosis, and that patient navigation can speed up the time to cancer diagnosis for Latinas,” Dr. Ramirez said. “We’re now testing if patient navigation also can speed the lag time Latinas have from receiving that diagnosis to starting their treatment.”

Others from IHPR involved in the study were Kipling J. Gallion, M.A., deputy director; Alan E.C. Holden, Ph.D., associate research professor; Edgar Munoz, M.S., statistician; Sandra San Miguel, M.S., research instructor; and Dorothy Long Parma, M.D., M.P.H., research instructor.
Reasons Latinos Should Join a Clinical Trial

Latinos tend to know little about clinical trials, surveys show. Clinical trials are research studies in which people help doctors find new prevention, screening, and treatment options. New treatments that look promising, and have already been tested extensively in the laboratory, are tested with volunteer patients.

It’s especially important for Latinos to participate in research so that doctors can learn more about the types of cancer that affect our community and what treatments are most effective, says Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director and professor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Listen to Dr. Ramirez talk in Spanish about the importance of clinical trials for Latinos.

Also check out these informative English and Spanish videos on the importance of trial participation.

IHPR News Briefs

Treviño’s husband and IHPR employees Rosalie Aguilar, Shannon Baldwin, Guadalupe Cornejo, Chelsea Cox, Daisy Morales-Campos, Susan Ogden, Amanda Sintes, and Gaby Villanueva. Another group of IHPR employees will be participating in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure on April 6, 2013, in San Antonio.

IHPR Director Names to AACR Conference Planning Committee

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director and professor of the IHPR, will serve on the planning committee for the Sixth AACR (American Association for Cancer Research) Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved. The conference, set for Dec. 6-9, 2013, in Atlanta, aims to unite scientists from a variety of disciplines to stimulate the cross-disciplinary interactions required to advance research in the area of cancer health disparities.

IHPR Welcomes New Employees

The IHPR has several new staff members.

• Chelsea Cox, Internet Curator, Salud America! network
• Several student associates: Ramon Ramirez (Salud San Antonio!); Celestina Hernandez (Salud San Antonio!); Brandi Cuevas (IMPACT study)
Éxito! Program Helps Latinos Seek Doctoral Degrees, Research Careers

Éxito! Grad: Lizbeth Del Toro
Puerto Rico

Puerto Rican native Lizbeth Del Toro was always encouraged by her sharp-as-a-tack grandmother, who advised her to hang with the right crowd, do her chores, and stay focused on her grades and her studies.

Her grandmother passed away shortly after being diagnosed with cancer in 2010.

But Del Toro took her advice to heart as she obtained a bachelor’s degree in biology/biomedical sciences from the University of Puerto Rico, works as a graduate research assistant and earned her master’s degree from the university in 2012.

“I ended my master’s degree program, I just defended my thesis, and [my grandmother] wasn’t with me, personally, but I know that she was, spiritually,” Del Toro said. “I thought that I wouldn’t make it, because I was in was a rushed time—I was traveling, presenting some other awards for my job.

“Then I started thinking about my grandma and about all that she said to me before, and I said, ‘I can do it. I’m going to do it for me and I’m going to do it for her, I’m going to do it for my family.’ And I did it.”

Del Toro, who is assisting on an epidemiological study on HPV and HIV prevalence among Puerto Rican male drug users, wants to achieve even more.

That’s why she applied for and was accepted into Éxito! 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.

Like many students at the 2012 Éxito! Summer Institute, Del Toro was feeling overwhelmed by questions regarding doctoral programs.

“Before the Institute, I had a lot of concerns about research and starting a doctoral degree after finishing my master’s [degree]. However, hearing all the speakers’ stories, I understand that I can work one step at a time and, at the end, the only thing that matters is all the experience I have gained,” Del Torro said. “I think the institute was crucial because I could see that there’s time for everything.”

Éxito! Grad: Ramon Torres
Kansas City, Kan.

Ramón Conception Torres, who experienced disparities and discrimination in his hometown in Puerto Rico and the U.S., can sympathize with minorities’ struggles.

Growing up in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a vivacious child without much adult supervision, Torres often found himself in mischief. Finding grace in the eyes of a security guard, his new mentor helped him restructure his life and focusing on what was important—his life and success.

Torres took his mentor’s help to heart, especially remembering his advice: “No one is going to do something for you, unless you do something for yourself.”

His determination to make something of himself propelled him to earn a bachelor’s in geography from the University of Puerto Rico and a master’s degree in geography from Binghamton University in New York.

Torres is currently a research assistant at the University of Kansas Medical Center’s Juntos Center for Advancing Latino Health programs. As part of this appointment, Torres has worked to develop strong relationships between the Mexican Consulate in Kansas City and the Ventanilla de Salud Movil Program.

To help him continue preparing to apply to a doctoral degree program, Torres applied for Éxito! 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.

He said the 2012 Éxito! Summer Institute was both motivational and informational.
San Antonio Program Targets Obesity among Latino Preschoolers

Parents may love chubby-cheeked infants, but public health officials worry about excessive weight gain in the first months and years of life.

Little research focuses on this time period.

But now researchers at UT San Antonio and the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio have found that interventions among Latino preschoolers can help them develop healthier habits, the San Antonio Express-News reports.

According to the report:

“So many of their eating habits are established at such a young age that this is where we’re really needing to work with parents and get the parents’ buy-in,” says Dr. Amelie Ramirez, director of the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the UT Health Science Center and a co-author of the study. “In the Latino culture, a healthy baby is a chubby baby. They do gain that cute baby fat, but we’re seeing nowadays so many parents letting them have so much sugared beverages and so forth at such an early age that they kind of become addicted to sweets and salt.”

The goal of the local study, called “Míranos! Look at Us, We Are Healthy!” was to create environments both at school and at home to help kids develop healthful lifestyle habits.

The intent was not to promote weight loss, because the kids are growing, but to promote healthy weight gain.

The results were positive: Kids who received the intervention showed increases in outdoor physical activity and consumption of fruit, vegetables and low-fat milk, as well as higher gains of gross motor skills, compared to the kids who did not receive the intervention. They were more willing to drink water. And the intervention controlled their weight gain.

“They were kind of taking their little overweight bodies and growing into them,” Ramirez says. “They were able to sustain their weight but increase in height.”

Read the full report here.

Finding Ways to Prevent Latino Childhood Obesity

Continued from Page 1

program’s impact.

“This Salud America! supplement is the culmination of several years of diligence, passion, and hard work in identifying and examining the most promising policy-relevant strategies to reduce and prevent obesity among Latino children,” said Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, MPH, director of Salud America! and the IHPR.

View the full supplement here.

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View the full supplement here.
Survey: Hispanics More Concerned with Family, Health than Average American

U.S. Hispanics emphasize family priorities and the need for access to recreational opportunities and facilities far more than the average American, and Hispanics also place greater responsibility for community health on local health departments and healthcare providers, according to a new survey.

The newly released National Community Health Survey, from The Atlantic in collaboration with GlaxoSmithKline, indicates many Americans are not convinced that their communities provide sufficient access to key resources for good health.

The survey sheds light on Hispanics’ beliefs on health responsibilities:

• 84% of Hispanic say that “taking care of my family” is their top priority (vs. 70% nationally).
• 49% of Hispanics say local health departments are responsible for community health (vs. 40% nationally). 46% of Hispanics say doctors and hospitals are responsible and 44% say community residents are responsible.
• 81% of Hispanics say that “information and education on prevention, health, and wellness” is very important to their health (vs. 64% nationally).

The survey also details Hispanics’ higher desire for recreational facilities:

• 72% say that open parks and green spaces are very important to their health (vs. 59% nationally).
• 56% say that nearby gyms and recreation facilities are very important to their health (vs. 41% nationally).
• 52% say that after-school programs and activities outside school hours are very important to their health (vs. 32% nationally).
• Hispanics are 10% less likely than average to say they have a great deal of access to open parks and green spaces.
• Hispanics also are more likely than the average American to say that taxing unhealthy foods/drinks is effective (62% vs. 43%), and that soda size limits are effective (59% vs. 44%).

Read more about the survey here.

Latino News Tweets

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

**Cancer**
- Prostate Cancer Care among Latino Men Affected by Many Factors
- Latinas Get Cervical Cancer Twice as Often
- Combating Cervical Cancer in Latinas

**Childhood Cancer Rising in Hispanics**
- Minorities Less Likely to Get Colon Cancer Screening
- The 5 Biggest Latino Health Challenges
- Alarming AIDS Rise in Latino Community
- Poor Health Literacy among Latinos Puts Them at Increased Health Risk

**Other Conditions**
- Study: 91% of Hispanics Report Lack of Regular Skin Exams
- CDC Study: Latinas Binge Drink at Alarming Rates
- Study: Latino Parents Less Likely to Seek Mental Health Treatment for Kids
- Study: Latinos in U.S. Regardless of Ailment Live Longer
Samantha Marie Marquez was only 4 years old when she noticed bugs walking on the water on a pond.

Those bugs triggered in Samantha a curiosity of nature that sparked a journey from inquisitive child to a rising young leader among women and Latinos in science — and she’s only 16 years old.

Samantha juggles three unique roles: a junior student at Richmond, Virginia’s magnet high school Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School for Government and International Studies; an over-achieving teen scientist who has already traveled the globe giving lectures to university audiences from China to the United States; and an award-winning inventor.

Samantha is the first Latino inductee into the National Gallery of America’s Young Inventors for her invention of Celloidosomes, a growth process used to create two-dimensional tissue with the potential to treat burn victims, help in bone reconstruction and patching damaged organs and brain repair.

It’s an accomplishment that has not only attracted worldwide attention but has inspired her, because of her global travels, to embark on a secondary mission — dispelling long-standing stereotypes and assumptions.

“We need to establish tolerance to end stereotypes of ethnic groups, cultures and religions,” she tells Latina Lista.

In science, Samantha is fighting the assumption that the field is “only for guys and nerds.”

So far, she’s been effective, as her numerous awards the past year testify: First place winner in engineering and the Grand Prize Winner at the Metro Richmond Science Fair; First place for Engineering: Materials and Bioengineering at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair; First place in research during the International Space Olympics (ISO) in Korolev, Russia.

At the ISO, Samantha became the first-ever Hispanic to win first place.

She also is receiving the 2013 National Neuroscience Research Prize through the American Academy of Neurology.

She also does a lot of philanthropic work with the American Christian International Foundation, and created the Neuroscience & Psychology Club (NeuroPsi Club) at her school, which she serves as president.

“We need to show young students and Hispanics that we are dreamers, visionaries and activists and that we love serving others,” she said.

Read more about Samantha here.

Latino News Tweets

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

Healthy Lifestyles
- Parent Denial, School Lunch, Advertising All Part of Latino Child Obesity Issue
- Study: Salsa Dancing May Get Older Latinos on Their Feet
- Study: Even a Few Extra Pounds in Latino Kids Harm Lung Function
- Childhood Obesity Rising among Students in New Mexico

Care Issues
- Study: Latinos, Minority Prostate Cancer Patients Less Likely to Access Robotic Surgery
- Low Participation of Hispanics in Pharmaceutical Trials
- Demographics
  - Is Latino A Race, Or An Ethnicity?
  - Census Might Make Hispanic a Race
  - Pew Hispanic Center: Slideshow on Hispanic Population Trends
  - Number of U.S. Catholic Latinos Shrinks from 58% to 54%
  - Only 3% of Kids’ Books Have a Latino Main Character
  - Report: Digital Divide between Latinos, Whites is Narrowing
  - Report: Record Number of Hispanics Are Enrolling in Medical School
**Vida Saludable: New Website Helps Latino Families Get Healthy**

Check out Vida Saludable, a new English or Spanish website with tips, strategies and facts to help Latino families get healthy and stay healthy.

For example, the site features bilingual information on topics such as measuring health, exercising as a familia, managing stress, staying health at work, etc.

It also offers a Spanish-language video on the importance of making regular exercise a routine part of Latinos’ lifestyles.

The site, developed by the American Heart Association, is part of the “Power To End Stroke” education and awareness campaign that embraces and celebrates the culture, energy, creativity and lifestyles of Americans. It unites people to help make an impact on the high incidence of stroke within their communities.

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### Latino Resource Tweets

**Resources**

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

- Spanish Materials: Kidney Health
- Campeonas: Breast Cancer Outreach for Latinas
- Rankings: How Healthy Is Your County?
- Info: 7 Common Symptoms of a Heart Attack in Latinas
- Info: 9 Tips for Caring for the Latino Family Caregiver
- Info: How to Find a Food Desert Near You

**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
- RWJF
- CPRIT

**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.

**Continuing Education Audio Conferences**

The Teleconference Network of Texas at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio has developed audio conferences on topics like blood banking, microbiology, nutrition updates, health education and training, social work and more. Register by calling 1-800-982-8868.

**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.

‘The Real Bears’ in Spanish
Investing in Youth Health: Santa Cruz, Calif.

Puppets and Peers for Latino Obesity Prevention
Creatively Teaching Health Education in Schools
Cancer Facts & Figures for Latinos

Latinos and Colon Cancer
Bilingual Info: Heart Health
Bilingual Video: Preconception Health

What Latino Teens Think about Smoking
Creating Latino Change Agents

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
Editor: Cliff Despres
Design: Jeffrey Heinke Design

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) is part of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. The IHPR is supported in part by the Health Science Center and its Cancer Therapy & Research Center and Regional Academic Health Center. The IHPR investigates the causes and solutions to the unequal impact of cancer and other chronic diseases among the populations of South Texas, Texas, and the nation.