For Latinas, Patient Navigation Can Speed Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Extra support for patients, called “patient navigation,” can lead to faster diagnosis for Latinas after an abnormal mammogram result, according to a new study by the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR), part of the School of Medicine at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

The study, published recently in Cancer, also suggests that patient navigation should be carefully targeted to have the greatest impact on eventual health outcomes.

IHPR researchers worked with partners in the federally funded Redes En Acción: The National Latino Cancer Network to examine the experiences of 425 Latinas in six cities nationwide. Each woman had received an abnormal result in initial breast cancer screening and was referred for further evaluation.

About half of the women received help from trained patient navigators, who provided culturally sensitive support and help overcoming barriers related to transportation, child care, insurance, language and more. The rest of the patients did not receive navigation.

About half of the women received help from trained patient navigators, who provided culturally sensitive support and help overcoming barriers related to transportation, child care, insurance, language and more. The rest of the patients did not receive navigation.

The study’s patient navigators, all Latinas themselves, were high school graduates trained to coordinate care according to the same patient navigation model.

For patients who received navigation services, the time between an abnormality being found and eventual diagnosis—whether positive or negative for cancer—was significantly shortened.

Those who worked with patient navigators were diagnosed in an average of 32.5 days, compared with 44.6 days for those who did not receive navigation.

“This study demonstrates that patient navigation can influence the time to cancer diagnosis for Latinas,” said IHPR Director Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH, a study author.

More specifically, researchers found the greatest benefit for women whose abnormalities were categorized upon discovery as “probably benign” — or BI-RADS-3 on the American College of Radiology’s Breast Imaging-Reporting and Data System.

The likelihood of cancer in a woman with a BI-RADS-3 screening result is about 2-4%.
Guadalupe Campos has always had a heart for helping others.

 Campos, who grew up in Mexico City as one of the youngest in a family of 12 children, always strove to help her siblings and parents overcome challenges. In her first years in the United States, she helped her family fill out immigration and tax forms.

 She understands all too well the challenges Latinos experience while trying to access services to healthcare. “I had to help my father get medical services. He was without Medicare for five years, and I tried everything to get help for him,” Campos said.

 Campos’ dedication to helping others has led her to work as a promotora — a trained community health worker — at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

 With the full support of her husband, she completed her GED in California, and after moving to San Antonio she decided to enroll in English-as-a-second-language classes. It was here that a classmate informed Campos of the opportunity to become a Certified Community Health Worker (CHW) through classes at Northwest Vista College. “I took my first class and knew I liked this right away,” she said.

 Although learning English was initially a challenge, nothing could stop Campos from pursuing her passion to make a difference in others’ lives. As she completed the CHW program, she also began to participate in projects, including the Eastside Promotores de la Buena Salud.

 “What really motivates me is the difference I can make in a person’s life,” Campos said.

 Upon joining the IHPR in Spring 2012, Campos has improved the quality of life for local Latinos as promotora for Salud San Antonio! project. Campos educates members in her community about cancer prevention services and helps them obtain access to healthcare. “Without services provided by Salud San Antonio!, it would be difficult for these...
Newly tailored, multi-component obesity prevention program among minority preschool children can help create an environment that positively impacts weight and gross motor skill development in children at risk for obesity, according to a new study in the journal *Childhood Obesity*.

For the program, called *Míranos!*, researchers from UT San Antonio and the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio tested whether it is possible to indoctrinate students with healthy behaviors—for life—via several positive interactions with their parents, teachers and school workers and a supportive learning environment at school and home.

Researchers tested the program among predominantly Mexican-American kids enrolled in Head Start in San Antonio, Texas.

Favorable changes occurred in weight scores, gross motor skill development, outdoor physical activity and eating healthy food among the children who participated in *Míranos!*

“*Míranos!* is a unique example of using a systems approach to create change at multiple levels and synergize multiple components to promote changes in preschool children’s physical activity and dietary behaviors,” the researchers concluded.

IHPR researchers involved in the study were: Amelie G. Ramirez, director and professor; Kip Gallion, deputy director and assistant professor; Deborah Parra-Medina, professor; and Amanda Sintes, research area specialist.
Video Series: The Mind-Boggling Impact of Latino Cancer

A unique new five-part video series explores the nuances of cancer in Latino populations.

The videos, produced by the Nurse Oncology Education Program (NOEP), aim to increase knowledge of the Latino cancer burden and how cultural values and beliefs may impact their access to care.

The videos feature several researchers at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, including IHPR Director/Professor Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Research Instructor Sandra San Miguel, and Patient Navigation/Promotora Guadalupe Cornejo.

The trio also plays large roles in the IHPR’s Latino cancer research network, Redes En Acción, funded by the National Cancer Institute.

IHPR News Briefs

IHPR Director Raises Awareness of Latino Health Issues

Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director of the IHPR, recently blogged about the importance of Latina breast cancer screening for Susan G. Komen for the Cure’s recent “31 Days of Impact” campaign, wrote about the need for more Latino cancer researchers for NBC Latino, and was quoted by the San Antonio Express-News on the need for more spending on cancer prevention.

IHPR Promotora Programs Take Center Stage at White House

Sandra San Miguel de Majors, a research instructor at the IHPR, touted the use of community health workers—called promotores—to improve people’s health at the Latina Health Policy Briefing for Promotores de Salud on Sept. 26, 2012, at the White House in Washington, D.C. The policy briefing, organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review the affordable care act, united key Latino health care providers, researchers, stakeholders and promotores to discuss successful evidenced-based Latino research initiatives utilizing promotores. The briefing featured Cecilia Muñoz, director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and Kathleen Sebelius, HHS secretary. San Miguel participated in a panel featuring promotora research and outreach successes. “[The IHPR is] discovering through our research efforts that promotores play a major role in effectively changing our Latino community perspective toward health and physical activity,” San Miguel said. “In addition to helping to navigate the community and connecting them with the appropriate social support resources, promotores are acting as behavioral change agents.”

IHPR Welcomes New Employees

The IHPR has several new staff members.

- Rick Carrillo, TV Producer/Director, The Salud America! program
- Shannon Baldwin, Internet Curator, The Salud America! program
- Rosalie Aguilar, Internet Curator, The Salud America! program
- Leo Santos, Web Programmer
- Edna K. Villarreal, Research Specialist, Enlace study
- Several student associates: Ruth Morris (IMPACT study); Susan Ogden (IMPACT study); Natalie Rodriguez (Y Living program); Vinerys Rodriguez (Enlace study)

IHPR Wins Web Health Awards

The IHPR recently won two Web Health Awards: “Silver” for its Patient Navigation Training Manual, which provides tips and tools to help organizations implement navigation services to help Latinos overcome health barriers, and “bronze” for its @SaludToday Twitter feed.
Èxito! Program Helps Latinos Seek Doctoral Degrees, Research Careers

Èxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training is the Institute for Health Promotion Research’s program that encourages Latino 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](#) and apply by March 1, 2013.

Èxito! Grad: Delana Gonzalez
San Antonio, Texas

Delana Gonzalez, born and raised in New Mexico’s Land of Enchantment, did not leave her education to chance.

Through the guidance of her mentor and strong Latino family support, she applied herself diligently and advanced as a scholar in the field of psychology at the University of New Mexico (UNM).

During her time at UNM, Gonzalez assisted on various research projects examining breast and cervical cancer screening behaviors among Latinas on campus. She also investigated breast and cervical cancer screening practices among Latino women along the U.S./Mexico border.

Wanting to incorporate her psychology degree into public health, Gonzalez applied for and was accepted into the UT School of Public Health in San Antonio.

Gonzalez, now a master’s degree student who expects to graduate in 2013, was encouraged by a local faculty member to apply to the 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 2012 Èxito! Summer Institute, Gonzalez received the necessary tools, information, and mentoring opportunities to successfully apply to a doctoral program when she earns her master’s degree.

“The summer institute has provided me with helpful information in pursuing a PhD,” she said. “I feel that I have established a support system with Èxito! staff.”

Èxito! Grad: Edgar Rodriguez
Seattle, Wash.

Edgar Rodriguez, uncertain where his education would take him, was encouraged by his family to leave his native Mexico City and pursue the type of higher education that would provide him with the skills to develop a successful career.

Buoyed by his family’s support and his never-give-up attitude, he successfully became a U.S. citizen and then dedicated himself to his educational career.

Rodriguez earned a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry from the University of New Mexico’s School of Medicine and master’s degrees in Latino American studies and public health, both from San Diego State University.

He has gone on to collaborate with scientific researchers and serve as a community health educator. He even developed a health and safety manual for low-wage immigrant workers in California.

“We’re basically trying to get Latinos to increase their rate of colorectal cancer screening,” Rodriguez said.

Uncertain of which goal to pursue next—continue international travel or pursue a doctoral education—Rodriguez was encouraged by his mentor to apply to 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.

He said the program is serving as both a foundation and a guideline for him as he decides whether to pursue a doctoral degree and/or cancer research.
San Antonio Program Mentors Disadvantaged Nursing Students

When nursing professor Dr. Norma Martinez Rogers arrived at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio years ago, she noticed that not as many Hispanic students as other students were completing their education in the School of Nursing.

A West Side native, Rogers earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of the Incarnate Word. “When I attended there, the school provided me help from a big sister. She helped me navigate the program. That was invaluable to me.”

Thirteen years ago—with $5,000 in initial funding—Rogers created Juntos Podemos (English: ‘together we can’). The mentoring program initially involved 20 Hispanic students. It has now evolved into a program for all nursing students from a disadvantaged background who would benefit from special help and guidance. The program pairs first-year nursing students with second- and third-year nursing students.

Juntos Podemos now has 301 students in the program, and they have logged 1,007 visits to the program’s office in the School of Nursing since school began this year.

Over the years, Rogers has received more than $1 million in funding for this project.

Rogers said an important key to the program’s success is matching mentors and new students who have similar lives or backgrounds, such as a single parent with another single parent.

The mentors help their mentees with content review to prepare them for tests.

One student who decided to participate in the program was Rosalinda Barrientos, who also grew up on the West Side. Barrientos, who recently graduated with a bachelor of science in nursing, is currently working as a graduate assistant for the program.

This spring, Barrientos will begin a master’s/PhD program in nursing at Boston College.

“I took Rosalinda to Boston so she could see the university and learn about the program,” Rogers said. “She decided to go there and was accepted into their graduate program. After earning her graduate degree, she wants to return to San Antonio and practice nursing here.”

Until Barrientos leaves in the spring to begin graduate school, she will work for Juntos Podemos to help first-year nursing students so they may one day follow in her footsteps.

Patient Navigation Can Speed Breast Cancer Diagnosis

Health care providers typically instruct these women to return for another screening within six months; however, delays and anxiety occur, appointments are missed and Latinas may skip subsequent screenings altogether, potentially setting the stage for confirmatory diagnoses at more advanced stages of cancer with lower survival probability.

In this study, on average, women with “probably benign” abnormalities received a diagnosis more than 40 days sooner if they worked with a patient navigator.

“For women with more ambiguous screening results, a faster diagnosis through patient navigation relieves them of the burden of worrying about their health,” Dr. Ramirez said. “It reduces the number of missed appointments and could contribute to reduced anxiety.”

Others from IHPR involved in the study were: Alan Holden, assistant professor; Edgar Munoz, statistician; Sandra San Miguel, research instructor; and Kip Gallion, deputy director and assistant professor.
Having a colonoscopy might be pretty low on Latino adults' to-do lists. Even hearing the term “colonoscopy” might make some people a bit squeamish.

But it can also save your life.

Just take it from Armida Flores, a *promotora*—a trained community health worker—at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Flores spends her days helping people confront cancers and illness.

Because of this, she began to worry about her own health and decided to schedule a colonoscopy, which can help identify colorectal cancer.

“"I was a little bit nervous about it but, to my surprise, the procedure was not too bad,” Flores said. “I was asleep, so I did not feel any pain or discomfort.”

After explaining the procedure using simple medical terms, the doctor even offered to pray with her, an extra comfort that Flores welcomed.

“The procedure was fast and the staff was caring.”

The night before the procedure Flores had trouble sleeping because of the liquid laxative solution she had to drink. However, she was surprised to discover that the liquid laxative, usually known for its horrible taste, actually wasn't bad. “The taste was okay, it was kind of salty and sweet,” she recalled.

The doctor found two small polyps in Flores’ colon that he was able to remove easily.

Flores eliminated potential dangers to her health just by deciding to take action.

“I think people are scared because of the word or because they heard something negative about it,” Flores said.

She urges people to not put themselves at risk just because of fear.

Learn more about colonoscopies in [Spanish](#) or [English](#).

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** Latino News Tweets **

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

**Cancer**

- Hispanic, Black Women More Likely to Present w/Higher-Grade Breast Cancer Tumors
- Hispanic Breast Cancer Survivors’ Perception of Health Affected by English Proficiency
- Study: Latinos’ Distrust Makes Them Less Likely to Get Cancer Screenings

**Other Conditions**

- Hispanic Children Most At-Risk for Acute Leukemia
- Cultural Stigmas Put Latinas at Higher Risk for Postpartum Depression
- Latinas at Highest Risk for Folic Acid-Related Birth Defects
- Gallstone Disease: Hispanics Disproportionately Affected
- A Look at Latino Smoking Rates, Consequences

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Cancer has overtaken heart disease as the leading killer of U.S. Latinos, according to a new report. Dr. Patricia Chalela talked to KSAT-TV about the ramifications for Latinos, including the need for screening to catch cancer at earlier, more treatable stages.

Why is Cancer Screening Important for Latinos?

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Armida Flores

**Hispanic, Black Women More Likely to Present w/Higher-Grade Breast Cancer Tumors**

**Hispanic Breast Cancer Survivors’ Perception of Health Affected by English Proficiency**

**Study: Latinos’ Distrust Makes Them Less Likely to Get Cancer Screenings**
Innovative Latina Doctor Among ‘Young Leader’ Honorees

A Latina doctor is among the 10 recipients of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Young Leader Awards: Recognizing Leadership for a Healthier America.

Honorees were chosen because they offer great promise for leading the way to improved health and health care for all Americans.

Each individual, who is age 40 or younger, received $40,000.

Dr. Carmen A. Peralta, an assistant professor in residence at the University of California, San Francisco, is one of the Young Leaders. She studies ways to reliably and accurately detect early kidney disease, when treatment could help prevent irreversible damage, with a focus on African Americans and Hispanics and their higher rates of end-stage kidney disease.

To understand Peralta’s work, it’s good to know some kidney basics. Healthy kidneys remove waste products and excess water from blood, secreting both as urine. Creatinine, produced through muscle metabolism, is one of those chemical wastes. African Americans as a group were long thought to have elevated amounts of creatinine naturally.

But early on, Peralta doubted that race would so uniformly or precisely define creatinine levels. She theorized that early kidney problems among African Americans were being overlooked because doctors discounted their higher readings—a possible sign of impaired kidney function—as racially specific. By examining the urine of large groups of young Blacks and Whites through 24-hour collections, Peralta showed that many cases of kidney disease were being missed because of that false assumption about creatinine levels.

She was determined to learn how to better detect those cases early on. In addition to studying creatinine in urine, she measured other markers for kidney disease like blood cystatin C and urine protein. Her “triple marker” approach, tested on approximately 29,000 people, improved the identification of those at risk for developing end-stage kidney disease.

Because her findings were so strong, the future international guidelines for Detection and Diagnosis of Kidney Disease will recommend utilizing her approach in cases where a patient’s kidney disease status is unclear.

Peralta now intends to help shift research on kidney disease from detection to prevention.

“We have challenged the current belief that race differences are only seen in advanced chronic kidney disease,” she said. “We showed that race differences in kidney function loss appear very early and that they are not explained by traditional risk factors.”

For the full list of Young Leader Award winners, go [here](#).

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**Latino News Tweets**

- [@SaludToday](#) for all the latest news in Latino health, like:
  - Healthy Lifestyles
    - Latinos among the Most Obese, Sedentary in U.S.
    - Diabetes May Be More Likely In Latino Individuals
    - Hispanics’ Amount of “Sitting Time” is Linked to Increased Odds of Being Obese and Having Diabetes/Hypertension
  - Care Issues
    - Survey: Healthcare Satisfaction Appears Higher among New Immigrants
    - Study: Social Barriers Impact Care of Hispanic Kids with Cancer
  - Demographics
    - Census: Whites No Longer a Majority in US by 2043 (Hispanics will comprise 31%)
    - Hispanic Immigration to US has Peaked, Asian Immigration is Rising
    - Report: U.S. Hispanic Pregnancies Fall as Women Choose Smaller Families
    - Youth Unemployment Soars in Past Decade (16% of Hispanic Teens Are Out of School & Work vs. 13% Overall)

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Cancer and Insurance: A Latino’s Touching Story

Gabriel, a part-time student with no insurance, is an acute myeloid leukemia survivor.

But he hadn’t had any checkups for nearly three years.

Then he found LIVESTRONG cancer services, which help the uninsured with accessing medical treatments and medical devices, finding assistance with insurance denials/appeals, handling debt and financial management issues related to a cancer diagnosis, learning about resources for financial assistance, and applying for federal/state programs, such as Medicaid, Social Security, etc.

“I never knew LIVESTRONG had services for young adults. It’s not like other places I’ve gone. The process was easy, and the navigator helped me find insurance that wasn’t too expensive,” Gabriel said. “He connected me to an organization that could help me with financial assistance, and he also helped me apply for two scholarships that I ended up receiving.”

For more information on LIVESTRONG services for the uninsured, call 855-220-7777 or go here.

IHPR Staff Profile

Continued from Page 2

individuals to be screened due to their economic situation,” Campos said.

“One day I ran into three different people who all came up to thank me for the classes and resources I had given them. It is very satisfying to know I can help people in this way.”

Campos indeed makes every effort to seek aid for underserved Latinos in her community.

This includes her desire to complete her associate's degree in community health, as well as volunteering with C.O.P.S. and Metro Alliance, where she helps achieve equality for Latinos by seeking safe neighborhoods in Westside San Antonio, as well as increased opportunities for immigrants.

“I am very grateful to have learned the important value of helping others from my parents, and to have a husband who supports me in everything,” Campos said.
Video Roundup – Click on the images below to view the video for each.

A Latina’s Touching ‘Heart Story’

Despite Progress, Heart Disease Still a Top Killer of Latinas

Latino Story: Why I Quit Smoking

Latina Shares ‘Health Policy Research’ Story

What Latino Schools Are Doing to Get Healthy: El Monte City, Calif.

What Latino Schools Are Doing to Get Healthy: Miami, Fla.

Salud America!: Creating Latino Change Agents

Mexico Starts War against Sugary Drinks, Fatty Foods

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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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.

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