San Antonio Researcher to Create New Tool to Persuade Latino Men to Get Screened for Colorectal Cancer

SAN ANTONIO (July 7, 2014) — Latinos are less likely than non-Latino whites to get screened for colorectal cancer, and are more likely to be diagnosed at harder-to-treat stages.

Latino men, specifically, have a 17% lower screening rate than non-Latino men.

That's why Dr. Cynthia Mojica, a researcher at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, is creating a cultural- and language-relevant print-based tool to persuade Latino men to get colorectal cancer screening.

Mojica’s efforts are fueled by a new grant from the Health Science Center's Mentored Research Career Development (KL2) Program in Clinical and Translational Science.

“The grant award will give me training, mentorship and research support to help me bring the community into the research process to help create a tool that can change their behavior and lead them to get screened,” Mojica said.

As part of the award, Mojica will go through training workshops, coursework, professional and programmatic activities, and conferences.

She'll also have assistance from an experienced mentorship team:
- Dr. Deborah Parra-Medina, a professor at the IHPR at the Health Science Center;
- Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, professor and director of the IHPR at the Health Science Center;
- Dr. Sally Vernon, professor of behavioral sciences and epidemiology at The University of Texas-Houston School of Public Health;
- Dr. Barbara Turner, professor of medicine at the Health Science Center; and
- Dr. Janna Lesser, associate professor of nursing at the Health Science Center.

For her research, Mojica will: identify and evaluate existing health-decision tools on colorectal cancer screening, such as brochures; convene an expert panel to review the best elements of existing tools; convene focus groups to determine how to tailor a tool for Latino men; and create a new tool that melds the best existing tool elements with cultural and linguistic tailoring to increase Latino men’s screening behaviors.

She will then submit for a larger-scale grant to try out the new tool.
“If successful, this new tool will provide a culturally relevant, language-appropriate tool to convince more Latino men to get screened for colorectal cancer,” Mojica said. “Colorectal cancer screening is clearly not a priority for many men, but it can save lives.”

For current news from the UT Health Science Center San Antonio, please visit our news release website or follow us on Twitter @uthscsa. For news from the IHPR at the UT Health Science Center, visit our blog or follow SaludToday on Twitter.

The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, one of the country’s leading health sciences universities, ranks in the top 3 percent of all institutions worldwide receiving federal funding. Research and other sponsored program activity totaled $231 million in fiscal year 2011. The university’s schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, health professions and graduate biomedical sciences have produced approximately 28,000 graduates. The $736 million operating budget supports eight campuses in San Antonio, Laredo, Harlingen and Edinburg. For more information on the many ways “We make lives better,” visit www.uthscsa.edu.

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio investigates the causes and solutions to the unequal impact of cancer and chronic disease among certain populations, including Latinos, in South Texas and the nation. The IHPR, founded in 2006, uses evidence-guided research, training and community outreach to improve the health of those at a disadvantage due to race/ethnicity or social determinants. Visit the IHPR online at http://ihpr.uthscsa.edu or follow its blog at http://www.saludtoday.com/blog.