Social Work Professor Receives Competitive NIH Grant to Reduce Mental Health Disparities Among Hispanic Populations

Dr. Katherine Sanchez, assistant professor in the School of Social Work, was recently awarded a nearly $400,000 research grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities through the NIH Academic Research Enhancement Awards. The research grant will aid in the funding of Sanchez's proposal titled "METRIC: Measurement, Education and Tracking in Integrated Care: Strategies to Increase Patient Engagement and Reduce Mental Health Disparities among Hispanics."

Dr. Sanchez notes this study will test a model of treatment for depression, engage patients in decision-making with their medical providers, and help them understand available options to overcome depression.

"My hope is that METRIC will advance the scientific knowledge about integrated healthcare to reduce disparities in the treatment of depression for Hispanic patients and increase their knowledge of the disorder, its causes, symptoms, and its role in chronic disease," said Sanchez, whose work was honored by National Institute on Minority Health Disparities Program.

Through the program, Dr. Sanchez participated in an intensive two-week course in August at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland to advance her research and assist in developing intervention and preventative measures for reducing health disparities among Hispanic populations.
Dr. Sanchez will be implementing her METRIC project with nationally-recognized researchers Dr. Madhukar Trivedi, director of the Comprehensive Center for Depression at UT Southwestern Medical Center, and Dr. Leopoldo Cabassa. Dr. Cabassa is an associate professor at the Columbia School of Social Work and assistant director of New York State Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Read more here.

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Social Work Faculty Report Findings on Adult Cancer Survivors

School of Social Work
Assistant Professor Dr. Gail Adorno and other researchers from UT Arlington and the University of Central Florida find that many adult cancer survivors confront challenges from their disease both after treatment and after years of remission.


"So often, the expectation is that a cancer survivor should be grateful for having survived a diagnosis of cancer. And while this may be true, those survivors with debilitating, lingering effects of cancer and its treatment are not always acknowledged within healthcare systems as needing continued care based on their cancer survivor status. Our findings suggest that cancer survivors do experience a variety of unmet needs from having had cancer and/or its treatment," said Dr. Adorno.

To gauge the unmet needs of cancer survivors, researchers assessed responses from a survey developed by the American Cancer Society of 1,514 participants, age 18 years or older. The participants were randomly selected from population-based cancer registries in 14 different states and survivors of breast, prostate, colorectal, skin melanoma, bladder, or uterine cancer. They responded to the open-ended question: Please tell us about any needs you have now as a cancer survivor that are not being met to your satisfaction.

A six-person interdisciplinary team spent more than 200 hours analyzing responses, coding them into 16 themes. The themes ranged from financial

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Faculty Publications & Presentation

PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Richard Hoefer, professor and director for the Center for Advocacy, Nonprofit and Donor Organizations


Dr. Maria Scannapieco, professor and director for the Center for Child Welfare


Dr. Catheleen Jordan and Peter Lehmann, professors


Dr. Catheleen Jordan, professor

unmet needs to personal control, including the inability to control urine and lack of sexual function.

Read more.

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Innovative Community Academic Partnership (iCAP)

Social Work Researchers Examine Needs to Make Arlington an Age-Friendly Community

A recent study lead by Drs. Gail Adorno and Noelle Fields, assistant professors in the School of Social Work, finds that the key to Arlington becoming age-friendly lies in its ability to embrace changing demographics and in providing services in eight areas of ability identified by the World Health Organization and AARP. The study is entitled Emerging Elders and Older Adults of Arlington, TX: Perspectives on Aging Well in the Community. The findings are a part of a larger study funded by a grant from the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services to the Tarrant Area Agency on Aging and United Way of Arlington.

The study findings are based on interviews with 60 ethnically diverse Arlington residents ranging in age from the mid-50s to early 90s. All residents live in their own homes located across Arlington. It identifies residents' existing strengths and needs for aging in place, and fosters dialogue about making Arlington an age-friendlier place to live.

"Age-friendly initiatives are taking place in selective cities throughout the U.S. and Europe," Dr. Adorno said. "The more we can learn about the diverse older adults in Arlington and how to address the unique quality of life needs facing this population, the more we can enhance and strengthen our entire community for all age groups."

The study concluded that an overwhelming majority of older adults desire to age in place (living in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of ability level, income or age).


Dr. Elissa Madden, assistant professor


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PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Katherine Sanchez, assistant professor


Dr. Noelle Fields, assistant professor

*Senior Companion Program Plus for Dementia Caregivers*. Corporation for National and Community Service Southwest Cluster Conference. Fort Worth, TX, June 8, 2015. Dr. Field's co-presenter was Gretchen Feinhals, director of the Senior Companion Program at the Senior Source.

Dr. Noelle Fields and Ling Xu, assistant professors, with Rupal Parekh, doctoral student
The research team incorporated a community-based empowerment approach and included graduate social work students Rupal Parekh and Karen Magruder, as well as community liaisons who are among older Arlington residents with well-established social networks in their respective cultural communities.

Drs. Adorno and Fields along with doctoral students Rupal Parekh and Brandi Felderhoff will present their research findings on aging well in Arlington and the role of faith-based organizations at the Gerontological Society of America's Annual Scientific Meeting in Orlando, FL from November 18-22, 2015. In addition to the findings from the aging study, the researchers will discuss the importance of churches and other faith based organizations as a source of community support, social connectivity and as a provider of health education and informal services for the aging population.


GRANT AWARDS

Dr. Alexa Smith-Osborne, associate professor and director of Center for Clinical Social Work

Recipient of a research grant to empower African-American faith communities in Texas, improve awareness and perceptions of mental health, recovery and wellness. Funded by the Hogg Foundation African American Faith-Based Mental Health Education and Awareness Initiative.

Also received a research grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health Recovery. This grant will assist in the dissemination of recovery-oriented mental health procedures to social workers and social work education programs in Texas.

Further received a research grant from UT System Neuroscience and Neurotechnology Research Institute with Dr. Hanli Liu, Fu Lye Woon, and Francisco Gonzalez-Lima. This grant will support "Transcranial Light Therapy and Imaging of Prefrontal Cognition in PTSD," a project that will develop an integrated neurotechnology for the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Collaboration with the Potter's House and Dallas City Temple Seventh-Day Adventist Church to

iCAP Research Projects Announced for 2015-16

This year's studies demonstrate high quality projects that generate sustainable interventions, programs, treatments and strategies which enhance well-being and cutting-edge research.

2015-16 iCAP Projects:

Adolescent Substance Use Intervention for Burmese Refugee Families with MOSAIC Family Services of Dallas. Researchers are Drs. Eusebius Small, Julieann Nagoshi and Craig Nagoshi.

Project Overview: The innovative intervention study tested the needs of refugee adolescents at risk of substance use by orienting both parents and adolescents to the problems associated with substance use and with tools and programs to improve family communication. The study evaluates the effectiveness of the intervention by emphasizing parental understanding of substance use and enhancing family communication skills. It also provides tools and information to help parents understand that not speaking English as proficiently as their children is not a deficiency to make them lose
Psychoeducational Intervention for Foster Grandparents with the Senior Source, Inc. of Dallas. Researchers are Drs. Ling Xu, Noelle Fields and Hui He.

Project Overview: This research project is designed to develop a psychoeducational intervention that addresses the needs of Chinese immigrant foster grandparents with particular attention given to empowering elders and addressing cultural barriers for volunteers who serve children with special needs.

Mixed-Modality Family-Centered Intervention for Adolescent Organ Transplant Recipients and their Families with Children's Medical Center of Dallas. Researcher is Dr. Michael Killian.

Project Overview: This study examines a family-centered intervention with adolescent organ transplant recipients and their parents. The intervention includes a technology-enhanced peer mentorship to adolescents who are transplant recipients and problem-solving skill training for parents.

For a complete description of the 2015-16 iCAP research projects, visit funded projects on the School of Social Work's web page.

Faculty Research

Closing the Learning Community Gap

Building community partnerships for research is a core value of the School of Social Work. So too is fostering sustainable, innovative programs of research. Our Innovative Community-Academic Partnership (iCAP) program integrates both in a new model of university-community partnerships that is participatory (i.e., mutuality and reciprocity), relational (i.e., networking) and sustainable (i.e., long-term survivability). At the heart of this model is the development of a community of learners to generate and disseminate new, innovative knowledge. The community-of-learner construct can be described in terms of "...active engagement in construction of knowledge; and rich discourse among participants in promoting their learning, cooperation and continuity of the learning cohort over time" (Smith & Bath, 2006, pp. 259-286).

There is a gap between the principles of communities of learners and their implementation; bridging it requires long-term planning, resource allocation and vision. Over the past five years, we have dedicated substantial training, interpersonal, educational and web-based resources to building such a community, with the result that research and knowledge generation skills have been shared across projects and over time.

The School of Social Work just received a three-year $200,000 grant from the University of Texas Research Incentive Program as a match for the Harold Simmons Foundation's iCAP gift of $1 million. The Innovative Community Academic Partnership has been a program of the School of Social Work since 2010 and is supported through generous gifts from the Amon G. Carter and Harold Simmons Foundations. The purpose of iCAP is to partner with community agencies on high-quality projects that generate innovative, sustainable interventions, programs, treatments and study mental health issues in African American faith-based communities. Funded by the Hogg Foundation.

Dr. Peter Lehmann, professor, and Dr. Anne Bain-Nordberg, assistant professor

Recipients of a research grant from the Interdisciplinary Research Program at UT Arlington. This grant will support "A System for Neuro-Feedback Anger Management to Prevent Domestic Violence," a pilot study that will explore the electrocortical and cardiovascular activities during anger and happiness stimuli in individuals through the use of electroencephalogram. Co-investigators for the research project at UT Arlington include Dr. J.C. Chiao, engineering professor, Dr. Jodi Tommerdahl, associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Yuan Peng, professor in the Psychology and Joint Biomedical Engineering Program, and Dr. Shouyi Wang, assistant engineering professor.

Dr. Richard Hoefer, professor and director of Center for Advocacy, Nonprofit and Donor Organizations

Recipient of a research grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health Recovery to Practice. This grant will assist in the dissemination of recovery-oriented, mental health procedures to social workers and social work education programs in Texas.

Dr. Noelle Fields and Ling Xu, assistant professors

Recipients of Research Enhancement Program (REP) grant for study entitled: "Exploring Healthy Aging among Older Chinese Immigrants and their Family Caregivers in Dallas, Texas."

Dr. Marcela Gutierrez, assistant professor of practice

Recipient of a research grant from the University of North
strategies that enhance client/community member well-being for 22 funded projects.

UTRIP

The School of Social Work has received research funding through the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) in keeping with UT Arlington's vision of becoming the model 21st century urban research university.

The UTRIP program will match research-designated gifts that range from $500,000 to $5 million or greater, with a matching cap of 50% or $2.5 million. The state match depends on the amount of endowments or gifts the institution receives.

The School of Social Work will use these funds strategically to further advance the development of our learning community by upgrading physical spaces, technology, and equipment.