SIRC researchers Drs. Flavio Marsiglia, Stephen Kulis and Stephanie Ayers have successfully partnered with researchers in Mexico on a recently funded five-year R01 grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health. Entitled “keepin’ it REAL in Mexico: An Adaptation and Multisite Trial,” the study is designed to address sharp increases in substance use rates among youth in Mexico, their connection to changing gender norms and rising violence, and the lack of culturally grounded, empirically tested, and efficacious school-based drug prevention programs in Mexico.

This study will adapt, implement and test the keepin’ it REAL (kiR) prevention program in middle schools in Mexico’s three largest cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey. The bi-national research team will investigate and incorporate into the curriculum gender-specific experiences with drug offers and appropriate drug resistance strategies in the Mexican context that may impact the youths’ risk of substance use and their responsiveness to prevention programs. It will also explore how youths’ perpetration, victimization and witnessing of violence may moderate the efficacy of kiR in Mexico.

Prevention science will be advanced by understanding how culturally influenced gender role norms affect substance use offers, attitudes and behaviors, as well as the success of universal prevention programs. In addition, the study will add to knowledge on how to execute collaborative, cross-national, translational prevention intervention research.

I am happy to again have this opportunity to say hello as we start a new school year. “In Focus” is entering its 12th year and SIRC is celebrating its 13th anniversary. This issue demonstrates the dynamism, scientific rigor and innovation that characterize SIRC. It also exemplifies the newly launched Arizona State University charter: “ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom we exclude, but rather by whom we include and how they succeed: advancing research and discovery of public value: and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.” As a minority health and health disparities research center of excellence, SIRC takes very seriously our university’s mandate to be inclusive and to generate solutions in partnership with communities. Our evidence-based interventions continue to mature in effectiveness and impact. As part of this process, we are establishing the Center for International Translational Intervention Research (CITIR). CITIR is a center within a center. The mission of CITIR is “to increase the capacity of local communities in Mexico, Central America and other emerging economies to improve the health and overall wellbeing of children, youth and their families through the development and implementation of appropriate evidence-based interventions and the expansion of community capacity for their delivery.” We see CITIR as the natural next step for our work - SIRC is going global. I hope you will have the opportunity to participate in some of our presentations about our national and international projects and learn and contribute to our ongoing planning process. This semester will offer many opportunities for us to connect in person and virtually. I am looking forward to greeting you in person soon. I want to thank our community partners, ASU, NIMHD/NIH and our amazing researchers and staff members for all their commitment and good work. I wish you a very productive and fruitful semester.

Good health and peace,
Flavio F. Marsiglia, Ph.D.
Regents’ Professor & SIRC Director
Dr. Flavio F. Marsiglia named Regents' Professor

The title “Regents' Professor” is the highest faculty honor awarded at Arizona State University. Those awarded have made revolutionary contributions in their area of expertise, are of a distinguished stature in the professional society, and exemplify service to the university and the community. Dr. Marsiglia's work on diversity, substance use and youth development is regarded to be among the best and most influential in the field and has been credited with a measurable reduction in drug use and high-risk behavior among youth in Phoenix and in more than 30 other states and in international settings. We are very proud of Dr. Marsiglia and this wonderful achievement.

Blackwater Community School Bullying Prevention Kick-Off

SIRC (Wendy Wolfersteig and Kate Hamm) and ASU's Dion Initiative (Brad Synder) collaborated with the Blackwater Community School to implement the evidence-based Olweus Bullying Prevention Program to reduce bullying and improve school climate.

Over 125 people including the Gila River Indian Community Governor, Stephen Roe Lewis, attended the Kick-Off event held in the school cafeteria on January 15th. Nick Lowery and his Champions against Bullying inspiring message spoke to everyone about working together to take bullying seriously and know what steps to take to prevent bullying from happening.

Community Fellows Training

On Friday, February 6, 2015, SIRC hosted a two-hour Community Fellows Training Workshop: Planning for Successful Data Management. The presenters of the workshop included Scott Yabiku, Ph.D. and Wendy Wolfersteig, Ph.D. The workshop was open to members of the Community Advisory Board and staff from their agencies to build capacity and enhance skills in data management. This workshop was sponsored by SIRC's Research, Education, and Training Core and Community Engagement & Outreach Core.

A total of 27 participants were in attendance and 25 evaluations were collected and analyzed after the workshop. The workshop aimed to increase practical knowledge including data collection, data management and data analysis—especially for those who may be new to data management.
This exchange project is part of the China-US Social Work Education Collaborative Initiative launched by the Council of Social Work Education in collaboration with the China Association of Social Work Education. Seven US universities (including ASU) were matched with seven regions in China to help strengthen social work master programs in these regions. The ASU School of Social Work (SSW) was assigned to partner with ten master social work programs in four central provinces in China that have a population over 268 million. Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), a university that has a long-standing relationship with ASU, is the hub university that coordinates the exchange between the SSW at ASU and other schools. In April, the ASU SSW hosted nine Chinese Social Work Delegates for the forum and, during the summer, Dr. Judy Kryski, Dr. Flavio Marsiglia and Dr. Fei Sun visited Wuhan and Nanchang to provide a 7-day training on family therapy to social work faculties in this region. During their visit, Dr. Marsiglia was inducted as a new Distinguished International Affiliate Professor at Jiang University of Finance and Economics.

Dr. Marsiglia and Dr. Sun are involved in helping establish a research and service center focusing on health and aging within the School of Social Work at the HUST. An additional group of Social Work faculty will be hosted at ASU during the Spring semester. SIRC supports the ASU School of Social Work with this initiative as part of its global engagement efforts.

Funded by the Academic Excellence and Inclusion, Office of the Provost, this half-day symposium, held May 1, 2015, focused on introducing students and early career faculty to established community partnerships. Targeted partnerships and topics focused on pre- and post-doctoral students as well as early career faculty representing disciplines across all campuses of ASU. Early career investigators learned the critical components of successful partnerships, including effective strategies for developing, maintaining, and sustaining community-embedded research. They were able to then integrate information and knowledge from experienced academicians and community members who offered insights and perspectives regarding the design, development, and implementation of successful research partnerships with community.

Academic unit partners included College of Public Service and Community Solutions, School of Social Work, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, College of Health Solutions, School of Nutrition and Health Promotion, College of Nursing and Health Innovation, the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center, and the Southwest Borderlands Initiatives. There were 59 participants including 7 pre/post-doctoral students and 14 community partners.
Science in the City

SIRC’s Community Engagement and Outreach Core (CEOC) served as a host to the Phoenix Union High School District’s (PUHSD) Science in the City. SIRC welcomed 30 students and teachers from the PUHSD and its feeder elementary districts on June 2, 9 and 16. Each of the three sessions allowed students the opportunity to learn more about hands-on science and research and how the two go together to develop interventions that help families in Phoenix and its surrounding communities. The students learned about the science behind keepin’ it REAL as well as how the researchers at SIRC used the scientific method to find out what prevention messages worked the best with 7th and 8th graders. All three sessions were facilitated by Patricia Dustman, EdD, and Mary Harthun, MA—master teachers and facilitators. This collaborative, community-university event could not have been successful without the help of the facilitators and volunteers, who donated time and effort to interact with students while they learned about health disparities at SIRC.

Health Policy Advocacy Training

SIRC’s Community Engagement and Outreach Core (CEOC) concluded its intense six-week Health Policy Advocacy training on June 18, 2015. The advocacy series kicked off its second cohort on May 7, 2015, with 20 participants. The 16 participants who completed the course represented a diverse scope of the community including: Mayo Clinic, Easter Seals Blake Foundation, Keogh Health Connection, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., Southwest Behavioral Health Services, Recovery Innovations, Gila River Indian Community, Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Tanner Community Development and more. The purpose of the training is to inspire and equip citizens with the necessary skills to become active advocates so they can build relationships with policy makers. We are grateful to the HOPE VI Emmett McLoughlin Community Training and Education Center for hosting this training series again. Health advocacy facilitators, Timothy Schmaltz and Catherine Eden, PhD, delivered “…an excellent training and preparation for social advocacy…and access to experts in various arenas,” stated one participant. Participants learned about health disparities and the health care system in Arizona, framing political messages, and how to work through community groups and coalitions.
SIRC Community Advisory Board

SIRC welcomes new Community Advisory Board (CAB) Members Dr. Jacob Venter and Ryan Tapscott.

Jacob Venter, MD, CPE, is the Division Chief of Psychiatry at Phoenix Children’s Hospital and has over 22 years of experience in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He received his medical degree from the University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa and completed residency at the University of Stellenbosch in Stellenbosch, South Africa. He also obtained residency training at Maricopa Integrated Health System in Phoenix, Arizona and Harvard Medical School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Ryan Tapscott, MA, serves as the Phoenix Program Coordinator at Esperança. He is responsible for developing and managing the oral health, chronic illness and anti-obesity programs in low income areas of Phoenix. Ryan has over eight years of outreach, volunteer recruitment, employment counseling, and Peace Corps experience. He received his Masters of Arts degree in International Development from Columbia University and Bachelors of Arts degree in English Literature from Arizona State University.

University of Nuevo León Faculty Visit

Dr. Maria Elena Ramos and Dr. Maria Zuñiga, both social work faculty at the University of Nuevo León, Monterrey, Mexico, visited SIRC to host a “Latin American Migration, Health, and Adaptation” pilot project. This pilot was designed to learn more about the life experiences of Latino families that have immigrated to the United States. The two professors also presented their work, “A Portrait of Emotions among Mexicans Living in the USA” as part of a special SIRC Health Equity Summer Lecture.

SIRC Project Updates

Mantente REAL (Guatemala City, Guatemala)

This project is a collaboration between SIRC and U Yum Cap, ONG, a Guatemala City non-profit aimed at implementing programs that promote social, cultural, and economic development for Guatemalans. Manténte REAL, a Spanish language version of the NREPP Model Program keepin’ it REAL, was implemented with middle school students attending parochial schools located in the most vulnerable and underserved neighborhoods in Guatemala City. With no other substance use prevention programming in place, implementers wanted to test whether or not this US-developed prevention curriculum resonated with Guatemalan youth and, if not, what adaptations to the curriculum should be made in order to resonate with this population. To date, 37 teachers and 781 students have participated in the study.

Mantente REAL (Montevideo, Uruguay)

In collaboration with the Ecumenical foundation, Uruguayan educational authorities, and the United States embassy in Montevideo, SIRC conducted a pilot study to test the feasibility of implementing keepin’ it REAL in Montevideo-Uruguay and to determine if this middle school-based curriculum would need adaptation to the Uruguayan population. Five middle schools, public and private, in the most vulnerable neighborhood in the capital city of Montevideo, were randomized into two treatment conditions (control versus implementation). Regular teachers were trained to implement the Spanish-translated version of keepin’ it REAL (Mantente REAL). To date, 4 schools and 353 students have participated in this study.
SIRC recognized as a contributor to advance social embeddedness across the university in recent Carnegie Foundation reclassification of ASU as a Community Engaged University.

SIRC congratulates recent PhD graduates Marcos Martinez and Jana Wardian.

SIRC was well represented at the Society for Prevention Research annual conference with abstracts by Dr. Stephanie Ayers, Ms. Allyson Hughes, Dr. Stephen Kulis, Ms. Giovanna Perez, and Dr. Gabriel Shaibi accepted. Thank you to everyone that submitted abstracts, your hard work is appreciated!

SIRC Highlights

October 7, 2015
Hyunsung Oh, Ph.D., School of Social Work
Social Network Traits, Interactions with Health Professionals, and Health Care Outcomes among Hispanic Patients with Diabetes and Comorbid Depression in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)

October 21, 2015
Colleen Keller, Ph.D., College of Nursing & Health Innovation
Thinking about Women and Culture in Health Behavior Interventions

October 28, 2015
Stephanie Ayers, Ph.D., Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center
Examining the Effects of Ecodevelopmental Influences on Substance Use for Urban American Indian Adolescents in Arizona

All events held in University Center, Suite 720, Noon – 1:00 pm

SIRC Ongoing Activities

Data Workshops recur weekly during active semesters with fall dates starting: 8/26/15 and ending: 12/2/15

Data Analysis Clinic (DAC) provides on-going methodological and statistical support and training to investigators, students & the community.

Advanced Statistical Analysis Work Group (ASAWG) is a workshop for students and faculty with advanced statistical training.

Held jointly, Wednesday, 1:30 – 2:30 pm, UCENT #707

Contact stephanie.ayers@asu.edu to join these meetings through video conference.
Congratulations to Drs. Lisa Spanierman, Sonia Vega-López, and Scott Yabiku on their recent promotion and tenure appointments.

The “Family Migration Context and Early Life Outcomes” (FAMELO) program project is supported by a new grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (P01HD080659). The program features three interrelated research projects that assess the role of migration on the social development and education of children and adolescents in three diverse settings: Mexico, Mozambique and Nepal. By focusing on different developmental outcomes and transitions, the projects combine to create a more holistic view of migration in shaping family environments and opportunities from childhood through the transition to adulthood. Dr. Jennifer Glick serves as Principal Investigator. Personnel on the program projects come from several units at ASU, other universities in the United States and in each of the three settings.

Recent Publications


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PMCID:PMC4289019


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