Greetings From Our Director

Dear research partners and colleagues,

This issue of *In Focus* marks the beginning of a new school year with its share of renewed energy and commitment to advancing SIRC’s mission: To generate use-inspired knowledge on the cultural determinants of health in order to reduce and prevent health disparities in partnership with communities of the Southwest. This issue also marks the beginning of the second year of our P20 award funded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). All the different cores and research projects and pilots of the Exploratory Center of Excellence on Health Disparities Research are actively engaged in their program of activities with their collaborators and partners. Thank you for your invaluable participation and support!

SIRC is also expanding its ongoing national and international transdisciplinary research collaborations. I would like to highlight the Familias Sanas/Healthy Families research partnership with the Maricopa Integrated Health Systems program funded by The Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services. More than 200 Latina mothers are now part of the study. We have also inaugurated a new Office of Evaluation and Contracts which strengthens our ongoing city, county, state and NGO’s partnerships. The articles contained in this issue describe these and other initiatives. All of these projects make important contributions towards the reduction and elimination of health disparities and they strengthen the wellbeing of our communities through research, training, and community participation.

I encourage you to participate in the many activities we have planned for the Fall semester. I hope to greet you in person at one of the upcoming SIRC events. In the meantime receive my best wishes for a productive and meaningful 2008-2009 school year.

Flavio F. Marsiglia, PH.D., SIRC Director

Upcoming SIRC Events

08/27/08 – Dr. Stanley Sue, Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Asian American Studies, Department of Psychology, University of California, CA, “How Mentally Healthy are Members of Ethnic Minority Populations?”

9/10/08 – Dr. Kelly Jackson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, ASU School of Social Work, “Living the Multiracial Experience: Transcendent, Defiant, and Resilient.”

9/24/08 – Dr. Steven Haas, Assistant Professor, ASU School of Social & Family Dynamics, “Blood and Spit: A Primer on Collecting Biomarker Data in Population-Based Research.”

10/08/08 – Albert Kopak, Doctoral Candidate, Justice Studies, ASU Liberal Arts & Sciences, “Multi-Level Modeling Applications in Health Disparities Research.”

10/22/08 – Dr. Brandon Yoo, Assistant Professor, ASU with Asian Pacific American Studies and School of Social and Family Dynamics, “A Preliminary Report on a New Measure: Internalization of Model Minority Myths and Distress among Asian American College Students.”

11/12/08 – Dr. Gabriel Shaibi, Assistant Professor and Southwest Borderlands Scholar in the College of Nursing and Healthcare Innovation at ASU, “Promoting Health in Latino Youth via Community-Based Participatory Research.”

SIRC at a Glance

Less than a year ago, SIRC’s status was elevated to an Exploratory Center of Excellence with a P20 grant awarded from the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), a center in the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This new status recognized SIRC’s past research performance and promoted it to a higher level of studies focused on improving health and reducing, eliminating or preventing health disparities in the areas of HIV/AIDS, mental health and drug abuse co-morbidity among racial and ethnic minorities in the Southwest region of the United States.

SIRC’s prior research was conducted primarily with Mexican Americans and American Indians. The new award allows for the inclusion of the next two largest minority populations in Arizona, Asian American and African Americans.

To date, all the various projects (Parent Component, Urban American Indian Project, ADD Health and Familias Sanas) under the SIRC umbrella are meeting planned projections. The formation of the Core groups ensures measurable progress in addressing SIRC’s key aims in reducing health disparities through the research projects.

If you are interested in learning more about our on-going research projects and activities, we invite you to browse our website and attend our Brown Bag and Colloquium events that sponsor national, local and international scholars for speaking events.

http://sirc.asu.edu
**ADD Health — SIRC Pilot**

There has been a 57% growth in the U.S. immigrant population in the last decade, and the majority of immigrant youth have Latino or Asian origins, mostly Mexican or Chinese, representing unprecedented cultural and linguistic diversity in the U.S. The well-being of U.S. society will increasingly depend upon children who are currently living in immigrant and racial/ethnic minority families. Despite ample evidence suggesting that racial/ethnic minorities suffer disproportionately from preventable diseases resulting from risky behaviors established during childhood and adolescence, health issues of Mexican American and Chinese American youth have not been adequately addressed.

Utilizing data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), this pilot study aims to examine how the level of acculturation and family factors relate to risky sexual behavior, substance use and depressive symptoms among Mexican-American and Chinese-American youth.

Mexican and Chinese cultures are family-oriented, however there is very little understanding about how family factors interact with adolescents’ acculturation level to influence health outcomes. This study aims to investigate the gaps from prior research focused on family protective factors and develop effective culturally appropriate interventions to prevent serious health problems.

PI for ADD Health is Angela Chen-Chen, Ph.D.

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**Urban American Indian Project**

*Culturally-Specific Substance Abuse Prevention*

Morbidity and mortality rates of many preventable conditions are disproportionately high in many American Indian (AI) populations. Well documented health disparities for AI adults and youth related to abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs extend to the growing urban AI population, who now constitute over 60% of the total AI population. AI youth report higher rates, earlier onset, more severe consequences, yet less perceived risk of harm of substance use compared to their non-native counterparts. To thwart the early onset and aftermath of substance abuse, primary prevention efforts have been undertaken with AI youth in several U.S. regions. But programs have not explicitly targeted urban AI youth using rigorous culturally grounded prevention methods. The proposed study draws upon the project team’s research on the etiology of substance use among AI youth of the urban southwest to conduct translational research that recognizes salient risk and resiliency factors identified by these youth, social and relational contexts that expose them to substances, and their culturally appropriate drug resistance strategies. This SIRC study is creating and testing the efficacy of a culturally grounded substance abuse prevention intervention targeting urban AI youth in 7th and 8th grades through a modification of a SAMHSA Model universal prevention program, *keepin’ it REAL*. Our community partners are Phoenix Indian Center and Washington School District.

PI for this study is Eddie Brown, Ph.D.

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**SIRC 6th Annual Research Conference**

“Reducing Health Disparities through Family Intervention Research” was the theme for the 2008 conference that took place April 25th on the 37th floor of the Arizona Club in downtown Phoenix. The keynote speaker was Dr. Hilda Pantin, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the University of Miami’s Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. She also serves as Director of the Prevention Division for the Center for Family Studies. Dr. Pantin enthusiastically engaged over 150 conference participants. Dr. Felipe Castro, Professor, Department of Psychology, served as Discussant and Dr. Olga Idriss Davis, Associate Professor, Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, took the role as facilitator for the panel discussion with community members including: Patricia Hibbeler, CEO for Phoenix Indian Center; Zipatly Mendoza, Office Chief, Arizona Health Disparities Center, AZ Dept. of Health Services; Dr. Scott Okamoto, Associate Professor, Social Work Program, Hawaii Pacific University; and R.J. Shannon, Minority AIDS Coordinator, Office of HIV, STD and Hepatitis C, AZ Dept. of Health Services. The program was able to combine the most current health disparities information affecting the communities of the Southwest with a strong use-inspired health disparities research emphasis. Conference attendees came from five universities and forty local community agencies.

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**SIRC Leadership Award**

Each year SIRC selects a nominated individual that exceeds the role of service within the community to acknowledge their achievements via the leadership award. This year the SIRC Leadership Award went to Patty Hibbler, Chief Executive Officer for the Phoenix Indian Center for her leadership and support of health disparities research partnerships serving American Indian Youth.
Healthy Families / Familias Sanas
SIRC & MIHS receive award to improve inter-conception care among Latina mothers

This project is a collaboration between Maricopa Integrated Health System (MIHS) and SIRC researchers who received an award to improve inter-conception care among Latina mothers. The project will develop, implement, and test a psychosocial educational intervention with Latina mothers attending a prenatal clinic. The aim of this study is to increase Latino mothers’ access to inter-conception care to enhance their well-being and that of their children.

The study has four objectives regarding prenatal and postpartum care: (1) To identify assets for and barriers to access to prenatal and postpartum care; (2) To identify cultural norms, values and practices influencing the utilization of prenatal and inter-conception care; (3) To develop a culturally grounded health education intervention for prenatal and postpartum care; and (4) To increase utilization of inter-conception care through the culturally grounded health education intervention evaluated through a randomized controlled trial measuring participants’ clinic visits during inter-conception and other well-being measures of the mothers and newborns.

The study is funded by the Hispanic Health Services Grant Program through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (1H0CMS030207)

ASU PI: Flavio F. Marsiglia, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator: Monica Parsai, MSW
MIHS co-PI: Dean Coonrod, M.D.

Parent Component
A Supplemental Intervention to Enhance “keepin’ it REAL”

SIRC responded immediately to the P20 award by launching two main studies and one pilot. The Parent Component Study is a supplemental parent education intervention to enhance the efficacy of “keepin’ it REAL.” This study examines the effects of improving the quality of the parent-child relationship, family function and youth skill building to reduce youth risks of drug use. Recent perspectives indicate that positive family influences are sources of support, guidance and problem solving that can directly discourage youth from risk behaviors.

To provide an aid for parents to strengthen parent/child communication and teach problem solving skills to Latino/Hispanic parents, a curriculum is under development with six lessons in draft format. We continue to review the drafts to incorporate feedback and comments from informants/focus group participants.

PI for the Parent Component Study is: Felipe Gonzales Castro, Ph.D.

Newly Published Book by SIRC Authors

The compilation of many years of culturally grounded research and teaching experience come alive in the newly released book titled: Diversity, Oppression, and Change: Culturally Grounded Social Work by Dr. Flavio Marsiglia, SIRC Director and Dr. Stephen Kulis, SIRC Director of Research. The book aims at contributing to social work practice and education by conducting a critical analysis of current mainstream practice and research methods and introducing culturally specific perspectives and applications. A formal national debut for Diversity, Oppression, and Change is scheduled to take place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in October during the Council on Social Work (CSWE) annual program meeting where the authors will present the book at a MEET THE AUTHORS session. Publisher is Lyceum Books, INC. out of Chicago, Illinois. www.lyceum.com.

“This is a smart book. The authors do an outstanding job of integrating and synthesizing a great deal of theoretical and practical information. It is a rare book on diversity that comes alive. It is not merely a rehashing of old ideas, but represents a new innovative perspective.”

- Rich Furman, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.
Who is SIRC?
Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center
An Exploratory Center of Excellence

- 29 Faculty Research Affiliates
- 21 Graduate Students
- 17 Community Partners
- 19 International Scientific Advisory Board
- 4 Core Groups

SIRC is Funded by:
- The National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD)/ National Institutes of Health (NIH), award: P20MD002316-01
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, award: 1H0CMS03207
- Arizona State University

Mission Statement
To generate use-inspired knowledge on the cultural determinants of health to reduce and prevent health disparities in partnership with communities of the Southwest.

SIRC’s Four Main Core Groups

The Research Core’s focus is addressing knowledge gaps pertaining to cultural processes and fundamental causes affecting health and health disparities. In line with its focus, the RETC group meets weekly with the Data Analysis Clinic formed for faculty and students conducting statistical analysis on health disparities studies. The Research Core is currently assisting the two new main studies and a pilot for the P20 grant.

PI for the Research Core is Stephen Kulis, Ph.D.

The Research, Education & Training Core (RETC) group’s mission is to develop the next generation of health disparities researchers and scholars through research training and education. Newly recruited are: Early Career Faculty Fellows in Health Disparities Research: Dr. Kimberly Arcoleo, Dr. Kelly Jackson, Dr. Alyssa Robillard, Dr. Gabriel Shaibi, Dr. Brandon Yoo. Post-Doctoral Fellows: Stephanie Ayers. Doctoral Student Research Interns: Carlos Calderon, Elizabeth Coleman, Steven Hoffman, Tiffany Locus and Jacqueline Mahoney.

PI for RETC is Mary Gillmore, Ph.D.

The Community Engagement & Outreach Core (CEOC) has expanded the Center’s outreach efforts and actively recruited additional community partners. Some of the key institutions engaged in minority health disparities issues within SIRC’s Center of Excellence are: Chicanos por la Causa, Concilio Latino de Salud (HIV/AIDS), Maricopa Integrated Health System (hospital), MedPro (hospital), Osborn School District, Phoenix Indian Center, TERROS (mental health), Office of Arizona Health Disparities Center within the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Asian Pacific Community in Action.

PI for the CE/OC is Olga Idriss Davis, Ph.D.

The Administrative Core aids in evaluating, organizing and coordinating activities and events in support of all the Core groups. Dr. Wendy Wolfersteig’s position is at the newly established Office of Evaluation under the Administrative Core group.

PI for this Core is Flavio Marsiglia, Ph.D.

Hot off the Press!
A Sample of Recent SIRC Publications


For a complete listing of our publications and presentations, visit our website at:
http://sirc.asu.edu