Greetings From Our Director

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am very happy to have this opportunity to say hello and to introduce this new issue of InFocus. We have had a very busy summer implementing three randomized control trials and a large secondary data analysis study. In addition, several feasibility, demonstration and evaluation projects have significantly advanced towards attaining their aims. This rich research portfolio continues to be led by a group of dedicated and talented faculty, students, and staff members with the ongoing involvement of our very active Community Advisory Board and other community partners. As we start a new school year, it is appropriate to ask ourselves: Is this busy scientific work or are we making a difference? Our research projects are producing efficacious interventions and are informing the field about strategies to prevent, reduce and eliminate health disparities. Another indication of relevance is the ongoing requests from communities around the nation and the world to access our evidence-based interventions. Increasingly, we find ourselves in the business of conducting translational and adaptation research by supporting a diverse array of NGOs and governments to enhance their ability to respond to communities’ real social and health needs and assets.

Our ongoing strategic planning process helps us to constantly assess our work in light of our mission. We aim at maintaining the right balance between 1) the design and evaluation of new interventions in partnership with communities; 2) the dissemination of findings through traditional methods (e.g., journal articles and non-traditional methods (e.g., health literacy); and 3) making the discoveries available to the end-users who can benefit the most from efficacious interventions.

Our own organizational structure helps us maintain a balance between research, training and community engagement and outreach but we are challenged to do more. For example, we need to purposely reflect upon the multiple demands we face and more clearly prioritize our efforts in line with our mission. I encourage all of you to participate in such efforts which will be intensified this year as we start to work on the new five years’ strategic directions plan (2017-2021).

Thank you for all your good work and for your ongoing involvement and support. Enjoy this issue of InFocus and please keep in touch.

Peace and health,

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

SIRC Welcomes Paul Smokowski, Ph.D., M.S.W., C.P.

Dr. Paul Smokowski is Distinguished Foundation Professor in Child and Adolescent Resilience in the Arizona State University School of Social Work with an interdisciplinary background in social welfare, child development, and public health. Dr. Smokowski’s research teams have been awarded over ten million dollars in federal funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As a prolific author, he has published over 75 articles and book chapters on issues related to risk, resilience, acculturation, adolescent mental health, family stress, and youth violence prevention. In addition to national research recognition and awards, Dr. Smokowski has authored a book titled Becoming Bicultural: Risk and Resilience in Latino Youth published by the New York University Press. Dr. Smokowski is working on completing his research work in North Carolina for the CDC as Director for the North Carolina Academic Center for Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention. In addition to this role he has relocated to Arizona to serve as Acting Director and Director for Youth Violence Prevention at SIRC.
SIRC and CAB Collaboration

Migs Woodside, SIRC Senior Advisor and CAB Liaison and SIRC's Community Advisory Board (CAB) represent a true partnership in collaborating for the good of the community! SIRC's mission is to develop and disseminate new information/data and to expand this knowledge base to healthcare and social work practitioners for the improvement of health equity. The CAB’s goal is to utilize SIRC’s research by sharing relevant findings to all practitioners for the promotion of health equity. The challenge was the language barrier from research terminology to laymen comprehension in reporting outcomes. The combined efforts between SIRC and the CAB to address this obstacle resulted in a successful collaboration to achieve community based participatory research (CBPR).

To promote the CBPR process within SIRC, the CAB formed six committees. The Dissemination Committee selected a SIRC research article with implications to the US population, and translated the findings into language, format and syntax appropriate for consumption by the general public. The result was the first research summary with use-inspired knowledge recently disseminated to the community for practical applications. Additional summaries are in the planning stage.

Congratulations to the CAB Dissemination Committee: Eileen Eisen-Cohen, PhD, Maricopa County Health Services and Josefina Count, LBSW, Roosevelt School District; Ad Hoc Reviewers: Essen Otu, MPA, Mountain Park Health Center and Teresa Peña, M.Ed, Mercy Maricopa Integrated Health. Migs Woodside spearheaded this project.

Research in Action

The CAB Dissemination Committee developed a Research Summary titled: The Importance of Acculturation on Latina Women's Health. The Research Summary was carefully developed to use layman terminology instead of academic language and was based on the original article published in July, 2012 in the Maternal Child Health Journal titled: Acculturation and Youth Utilization among Mexican heritage women in the U.S. The original article describes a study of the relationship between the acculturation level and postpartum visit compliance among Latina women and employed ASU students in the role of promotorias to assist patients. Dr. Flavio Marsiglia adds, "The inclusion of promotorias to relate to Spanish speaking Latina patients was a major factor in improving patients' interconception care". The study indicates that women who are less acculturated are less likely to ask questions pertaining to their health or the health care system of the dominant culture. An important feature of the project is an assessment of acculturation based on results of a bicultural involvement questionnaire given to participants. Information from the questionnaire can aid practitioners in determining the level of patient acculturation and is an important tool for clinicians to develop culturally sensitive interventions and appropriate medical care. The questionnaire was originally created by Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernandez, 1980. View Research Summary: https://sirc.asu.edu/news/news-items/research-in-action-14-01.pdf

Community Advisory Board Chair-Yvonne Fortier

Congratulations to Yvonne Fortier on her election as the new Chair of the Community Advisory Board. Yvonne has played an important role as a long time member of the CAB as well as serving on its Public Policy Committee. She is also a member of SIRC's American Indian Steering Committee which advises the SIRC Research Core on directions for American Indian Research. Yvonne is Director of Clinical Services at Native American Connections, where she oversees behavioral health operations and patients in residential treatment for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders, as well as child, adolescent and family outpatient services. In addition, Yvonne currently serves on 15 committees and work groups. She has been involved in several major research projects funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and a program under the auspices of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Currently, Yvonne is a Ph.D candidate in Addictions Counseling at Westbrook University.
Uruguay Initiatives

Drs. Flavio Marsiglia and Stephen Kulis recently traveled to Uruguay to begin a cultural adaptation and feasibility trial of the SIRC keepin’ it REAL adolescent substance abuse curriculum. SIRC has established a research partnership with a local foundation and the educational authorities of Uruguay to implement the curriculum in middle schools in Montevideo. As one of the first countries in the world to decriminalize cannabis use, Uruguay has welcomed the prevention effort as one of many efforts under way to ensure that marijuana use remains an adult behavior. “We are very pleased that we can be in Uruguay adapting and testing our curriculum at this time of great policy changes for the country,” said Dr. Marsiglia. “Dr. Kulis and I were joined by a research collaborator from Mexico, Dr. Bertha Nuño-Gutierrez, to train local teachers in utilizing the curriculum.” The drug prevention administrator of the National Drug Board Council attended the first training session and expressed her support for the effort. In addition, the American embassy in Montevideo has committed financial support for the study. Currently, pre-tests are being administered, and the implementation phase has already begun. SIRC investigators will be in close contact with their research partners in Uruguay and will be monitoring the effects of the curriculum.

Mexico Training Initiatives

The Jalisco Project, conducted in central Mexico by a bi-national team of investigators, is evaluating the applicability of keepin’ it REAL (Manténte REAL) - SIRC’s Model Program - through a pilot test in two public schools in the metropolitan Guadalajara area. Led by Dr. Flavio Marsiglia and Dr. Stephen Kulis in partnership with Dr. Bertha Nuño-Gutierrez of the University of Guadalajara, Manténte REAL was implemented in five classrooms of 8th grade students in one school with the second school serving as a control site. Short-term effects show that students receiving Manténte REAL had significantly lowered alcohol and tobacco use at post-test compared to students in the control school. These results were particularly salient for females who received Manténte REAL. Long-term results, at a follow-up one year later, indicate Manténte REAL was effective in reducing the escalation of alcohol use among girls, and the use of marijuana among boys. Two other outcomes show interesting effects for girls who received Manténte REAL: decreases in poor decision making and increases in negative expectancies about drugs.

SIRC Embedded in Community—ELSC Project

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, up to half of all Latino youth born in 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. Latino youth have the highest rates of metabolic syndrome, obesity and pre-diabetes. To address these alarming statistics, SIRC in partnership with St. Vincent de Paul Society's Virginia G. Piper Medical Clinic, has successfully completed the first round of research. SIRC's Principal Investigator, Dr. Gabe Shaibi, has started the recruitment process for the second study of Every Little Step Counts Program for Latino youth between the ages of 14-16 who meet the guidelines for obesity. Yolanda Konopken, program director for SVdP's Family Wellness Program says, "We present things in a culturally relevant way so that it is easy for a family to incorporate better foods and activities into their life. It is about making exercise a form of play and bonding for the family. It is about making positive imprints so that people have good experiences with healthy choices". Yolanda was the recipient of this year's Community Leadership Award at SIRC's Annual Research Conference in recognition for her commitment to health equity issues.

Graduates of ELSC started a running club called Vinny's Kids
Second Edition from SIRC Authors

The second edition of *Diversity, Oppression & Changes* is now available for purchase. The book is a compilation of many years of culturally grounded research and teaching experience by authors **Flavio Francisco Marsiglia, PhD**, Distinguished Foundation Professor of Cultural Diversity and Health in the School of Social Work at Arizona State University and Director for the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) and **Stephen Kulis, PhD.**, ASU Professor of sociology in the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics and Director of Research at SIRC. New in this second edition is a chapter on cultural and social determinants of well-being; a global focus, including extensive coverage of Canadian content and discussion of anti-oppressive practice (AOP); content on identity theory and expanded content on LGBTQ issues. Additionally, there are expansive *Notes from the Field* with concrete examples of culturally prescribed norms, behaviors, beliefs and experiences. Purchase through Lyceum Books, Inc. in Chicago, IL. [http://www.lyceumbooks.com/DiversityOppressionChng2e.htm](http://www.lyceumbooks.com/DiversityOppressionChng2e.htm)

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