Greetings From Our Director

I hope this issue of In Focus finds you well. I want to acknowledge the challenges the nation, the state, and the university are facing as we respond to the consequences of an extraordinarily severe economic downturn. Our communities are suffering at many different levels as we continue to learn about the reduction or cancellation of basic services. We need to be more vigilant than ever about vulnerable populations and the ability to access equitable and responsive health care services. These challenges prompt us to renew our commitment to reducing and eliminating health disparities. In partnership with communities, SIRC continues to make great progress in this area through intervention research studies that can improve the quality of life of our communities. In addition to our ongoing studies, I am happy to announce that competitive seed research pilot grants have just been awarded to three interdisciplinary research teams led by very promising SIRC early career health disparities research fellows. They are: Dr. Kimberly Arcoleo (Nursing), Dr. Allysa Robillard (African American Studies), and Dr. Gabriel Shaibi (Nursing). Please join me in congratulating our colleagues for this important achievement.

Our community partnerships and the numbers of faculty research affiliates continue to grow. The different teams under the research core are producing much needed and relevant findings; the training core and the community engagement/outreach core are very active and expanding their programs. The Community Advisory Board and the International Scientific Advisory Board are actively engaged in supporting an ongoing strategic planning process in order to manage growth, to assure the center’s sustainability, and to assess the consistency of our programs with our mission and goals. The Executive Council’s annual retreat in April will focus on the strategic plan and will develop a set of priorities for the coming years.

We are more than halfway through the academic year and SIRC is full of anticipation as we prepare for our 7th annual research conference. The gathering is an extraordinary forum for exchange and renewal. As in previous years we expect equal numbers of community research partners and graduate students, faculty and staff members associated with SIRC. Please see the exciting program posted on the SIRC webpage and register today. I am looking forward to seeing you on March 20th. Thank you for your continued participation and support.

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

Upcoming SIRC Events

02-25-09 - Maria Lopez-Class, Ph.D., MPH., Research Instructor in the Department of Oncology at Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, D.C. “Recruitment and Assessment of Male Latino Smokers: A Pilot Study”

03-20-09 - SIRC 7th Annual Research Conference “Culture Counts! Preventing and Reducing Health Disparities” Keynote speaker is Aida Luz Maisonet Giachello, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Jane Addams College of Social Work & Executive Director of Midwest Latino Health Research, Training and Policy Center, University of Illinois at Chicago

04-01-09 - Kim Arcoleo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor - CONHI Research Support Department, ASU. “Designing and Maintaining Fidelity of Behavioral Interventions in Health Disparities Research”

04-08-09 - John David Carpten, Ph.D., Director & Senior Investigator, Integrated Cancer Genomics Division, Translational Genomics Research Institute. “Update of Basic Research on Prostate Cancer”

04-15-09 - Karen Stein PhD, RN, FAAN, Karen Stein, Ph.D., SIRC Visiting Scholar, Associate Professor of Nursing, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. “Eating Disorders in Mexican American Women: Is It Really Just About Body Image?”

04-22-09 - Steven A. Haas, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Population Dynamics, School of Social and Family Dynamics, ASU TWO HOUR WORKSHOP - “A Primer on Latent Growth Curve Models in Mplus”

SIRC at a Glance

SIRC is an Exploratory Center of Excellence focused on health and health disparities research in drug abuse, mental health and HIV/AIDS among minority populations of the Southwestern United States.

During the fall semester SIRC has been well represented at three national conferences in California, Pennsylvania, Maryland and at an international methods seminar in Sevilla, Spain. A popular conference for SIRC researches was the first NIH Research Summit on The Science of Eliminating Health Disparities in National Harbor, MD. The December 2008 conference was sponsored by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD). A large SIRC delegation attended to present findings from ongoing health disparities research. The Summit provided fruitful opportunities for exchange with other national and international scholars.

In addition to these activities SIRC has added thirteen published articles this quarter for a total of eighty six publications and eight manuscripts in queue for printing. Visit our website to learn more about SIRC’s on-going research projects, publications, scheduled activities and events.
Community Engagement and Outreach Core (CEOC)

The Community Engagement and Outreach Core (CEOC), one of SIRC’s four core groups, expands its research activity in health disparities by launching a health website in late January, 2009. The website provides information in both Spanish and English related to HIV/AIDS, mental health and substance abuse. The CEOC website will fill a need for readily available and easy accessible health information. To assure that even those without computer access can obtain needed information on the health website, the CEOC group has facilitated the strategic placement of computer kiosks with two of SIRC’s community partners, the Valle del Sol office in downtown Phoenix, and the John F. Long center in Maryvale. Valle del Sol is an outpatient clinic that works with men and women on issues of substance abuse, mental health and HIV/AIDS. The John F. Long center provides a variety of services including counseling and assistance in crisis situations to underserved populations. The kiosks allow clients free access to the CEOC website which provides information on various health issues and prevention resources with the option to contact CEOC. Configuration of kiosks and training of clinic staff is planned for March, 2009. The new CEOC website is: http://sirc-ceoc.asu.edu

Pi for CEOC is Dr. Olga Idress Davis

Healthy Families/Familias Sanas

This project is 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 women’s access to inter-conception care to help enhance their well-being and that of their children.

The study successfully recruited 400 women with ongoing studies and preliminary results indicating the participating intervention group is more likely to return at the end of pregnancy for postpartum care than the control group.

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

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

Greater Phoenix Forward
SIRC Raises Awareness for Valley Prevention Needs

“Greater Phoenix Forward” is a project by Arizona State University’s College of Public Programs and the Morrison Institute for Public Policy under the direction of Dean Debra Friedman and University Vice President. In magazine format, this new report outlines current data and perspectives that warrant prioritization on providing human needs services first before focusing on the physical infrastructure demands of our growing Valley communities.

Dr. Flavio F. Marsiglia, SIRC Director, Tanya Nieri, Ph.D., and David Becerra, Ph.D., authored one of thirteen chapters in the comprehensive report titled, “Substance-Abuse Prevention and Treatment: Challenges and Opportunities” to assist community and policy leaders gain an in-depth understanding of one of the many challenges that impact Maricopa County communities and the need to meet present and future increased human services. See website for complete report.

http://copp.asu.edu/do/from-the-dean/greater-phoenix-forward

Families in Action/Familias en Acción
Formerly known as the Parent Component

The Families in Action study is a supplemental parent education intervention to enhance the efficacy of keepin’ it REAL. A curriculum was developed based on recent perspectives indicating positive family support and guidance influence children and discourage them from risk behavior. The curriculum for this pilot phase was developed by Mary Harthun and Monica Parsai, aims to aid Latino/Hispanic parents strengthen parent/child communication while teaching problem solving skills. Parents meet twice weekly for four weeks totaling eight sessions. The first of three pilot groups completed the first phase of testing the curriculum and celebrated by bringing their families to a “graduation party”. The group expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn valuable parental skills and requested follow up classes. SIRC presented the group with certificates for completing the program and parents gave their children letters renewing their commitment to family issues. The second pilot group is scheduled to start on February 23, 2009.

Pi for Families in Action is Felipe Castro, Ph.D.
Project Director is Monica Parsai, Ph.D.
Co - Pi Flavio F. Marsiglia, Ph.D.

SIRC International Visiting Scholars

SIRC’s global engagement is known for field research projects in Spain and Mexico but SIRC also has a very active scholars’ exchange program with Spain. To date SIRC has welcomed three international exchange scholars; two representing the University of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia and one from the University Complutense of Madrid. The first two exchanges, Dr. Paula Villar and Dr. Maria Angeles Luengo were funded by their home country and the most recent international visiting scholar, Dr. Juan Luis Recio, was funded by the National Institutes on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health through their competitive Distinguished International Scientific Collaboration Award (DISCA). Dr. Marsiglia served as the U.S. Distinguished Mentor.
SIRC Congratulates Dr. Crista Johnson

Maricopa Integrated Health System has a new program to help meet the medical needs of African women while training dozens of medical professionals to better understand their culture. As a result, the Refugee Women’s Health Clinic opened its ob-gyn department in central Phoenix and celebrated with a grand opening on Friday, January 30, 2009. The clinic’s mission is to provide culturally grounded and linguistically appropriate health services to the growing refugee and immigrant community in the Phoenix metropolitan area while seeking to reduce/eliminate health disparities and cultural barriers to care. In addition to providing services the clinic plans to offer education about pregnancy, childbirth, preventive health and gynecology services to patients while conducting educational seminars for lay community health workers and refugee providers. This clinic is believed to be the second one in the U.S. that specializes in obstetrics and gynecology for African refugees and immigrants. Crista Johnson, MD, MSc, is an OB/GYN with extensive knowledge and experience assisting immigrant and refugee women and is committed to providing quality care with cultural sensitivity to the African women population in Arizona. Dr. Johnson is the medical director for the new Refugee Woman’s Clinic. Dr. Johnson perpetuates her passion for this work in her role at SIRC as Clinical Research Affiliate working on the Refugee Women’s Health Project.

SIRC Colloquium

SIRC hosts popular bi-monthly research lectures during the fall and spring semesters. Early this fall, Dr. Stanley Sue, Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Asian American Studies. Department of Psychology, University of California Davis, delivered an informative presentation entitled “How Mentally Healthy are Members of Ethnic Minority Populations?” at a SIRC hosted colloquium. Dr. Sue’s research has been devoted to ethnicity and mental health and the delivery of mental health services to culturally diverse groups. Other local presenters this fall at SIRC’s bi-monthly sponsored Brown Bag series include: Kelly Jackson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, ASU School of Social Work; Steven Haas, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, ASU School of Social & Family Dynamics; Albert Kopak, MS, ASU School of Social Transformation; Brandon Yao, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, ASU Asian Pacific American Studies and School of Social and Family Dynamics & Gabriel Shaibi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Southwest Borderlands Scholar in the College of Nursing and Healthcare Innovation at ASU.

Living in Two Worlds
Formerly known as Urban American Indian Project

Health disparities for American Indian adults and youth related to abuse of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs is well documented. This SIRC project extends its research to the growing Urban American Indian population who now constitute over 60% of the total AI community. AI youth report higher rates, earlier onset, more severe consequences and yet less perceived risk of harm of substance use compared to their non-native counterparts. Although national prevention programs do exist, there are none that specifically target urban AI youth using rigorous culturally grounded prevention SIRC methods.

This project is testing a culturally grounded substance abuse prevention intervention curriculum for urban AI youth in 7th and 8th grades by modifying the keepin’ REAL model program. The project will test the feasibility and efficacy of the adapted substance abuse prevention intervention in a randomized control trial. The pilot test, sites and dates for this curriculum are being coordinated with the Phoenix Indian Center and two Washington Elementary Schools. To date the L2W project has completed four drafts of the twelve planned lessons of the curriculum and recruited two MSW student interns, Tahnee Baker and Crescentia Tso, from the ASU School of Social Work as liaisons for the pilot sites with all parental consent, student assent, student pre-test surveys and curriculum feedback forms complete.

Pi for this study is Eddie Brown, DSW Co - PI Stephen Kulis, Ph.D.
Project Director Patricia Dustman, Ed.D.

Adolescent Health
(ADD Health)

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. The specific aims of this pilot are to describe the trajectories of risky sexual behavior, substance use and depressive symptoms from adolescence to early adulthood and determine if they differ among the Mexican American and Chinese American ethnic minority groups, gender, and acculturation level considering trajectories and changes in family factors. The final aim is to test a model that hypothesizes that acculturation level interacts with family factors to influence risky sexual behavior, substance use and depressive symptoms over time. To date this pilot has completed the aims for one of the three outcome measures (depressive symptoms).

Pi is Angela Chen, Ph.D. Co - PI Mary Gillmore, Ph.D.

SIRC Highlights

SIRC continues to showcase its community engaged intervention research and outreach successes with keepin’ REAL. In a recent article published in Pediatrics (Spoth et al, 2008), kiR was listed among the most promising interventions for youth 10-15 years of age on alcohol outcomes. To date, SIRC has developed two adaptations of keepin’ REAL.

Below is the link to the article in Pediatrics:
http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/121/Supplement_4/S311
Link to the SIRC kiR website is:
http://keepinitreal.asu.edu/
Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center

An Exploratory Center of Excellence

- Four Core Groups
- Faculty Research Affiliates
- Graduate Students
- Community Advisory Board
- International Advisory Board

SIRC is Funded by:

- The National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NC-MHD)/ National Institutes of Health (NIH), award: P20MD002316
- 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 Community Engagement & Outreach Core (CEOC) continues to expand the Center’s outreach efforts to the community. The quarterly Community Advisory Board meets in February where collaborations are developed guided by the health and health disparity needs of minority populations in our neighborhoods. Mona Bapat is the current Graduate Research Associate assigned to support this project. Both Mona and previous GA, Dominique McBride have been inspired by Dr. Olga Idriss Davis and her commitment to SIRC through continuous research in community health disparity issues. Dr. Davis’ commitment for effective change was recently acknowledged by her appointment to the Arizona Governor’s Commission on Women’s and Children’s Health.

PI for the CE/OC is Olga Davis, 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. SIRC Early Career Faculty Fellows in Health Disparities Research, Post-Doctoral Fellows and Doctoral Student Research Interns participate in bi-monthly academic research lectures, data analysis clinics, writing workshops and poster presentations as part of their training. Writing workshops meet monthly under the direction of Dr. Jenny Kronenfeld. Dr. Kronenfeld, an experienced editor, provides guidance to submit articles for review to appropriate journals.

PI for RETC is Mary Gillmore, Ph.D.
Associate Director is Perla Vargas, Ph.D.

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 (DAC) formed for faculty and students conducting statistical analysis on health disparities studies. In addition to the DAC, the Statistics Work Group (SWorG) meets weekly for more advanced data analysis. Dr. Willie Prado from the University of Miami frequently joins via videoconference to consult and advise. The Research Core will be assisting three new studies under the seed research pilot grants.

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

The Administrative Core aids in evaluating, organizing and coordinating activities and events in support of all the Core groups. SIRC welcomes Ms. Kathy Williams, Administrative Assistant to the team.

PI for the Administrative Core is Flavio F. 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