Dear friends and colleagues,

I am very happy to be in touch with you through this new issue of InFocus. As you know SIRC is entering its 16th year since its founding and CITIR is a relatively new center but much is happening at the local and global levels. SIRC is rapping-up the P20 NIMHD/NIH center grant main studies and preparing a new competitive center grant application. CITIR continues its work in Mexico through its two NIH funded grants and the feasibility studies in five other countries. Through the brief articles below, you will become acquainted with some of the key developments and news associated with SIRC and CITIR. Our investigators and their community partners continue to discover, to innovate and to contribute real solutions to important health problems in our communities. It is a joyful journey, shared with many regional, national and international investigators and their community partners. International research collaboration has always been important to ASU, but in these times it seems to be even more relevant.

We share one planet and all nations are interdependent, we need each other. Lately, such a commonly accepted belief appears to be in question at all levels of society. Through our work and mission we continue to strengthen our efforts to improve the quality of life of our communities in the Southwest and across international borders. Our joint research projects are metaphors for bridges of understanding; they allow us to express our shared concern for the wellbeing of humanity without regard of national origin, religion or borders. Our work is made possible because of the contributions of US citizens, residents, immigrants, refugees and international collaborators from many countries outside of the US. Through healthy villages, cities, and nations we are building a healthier and more just planet. Thank you for your commitment and for all your good work towards the development of local solutions to the global health challenges we face. Please take the time to review the different articles and notes included in this issue of InFocus. Keep in touch and visit us often in person, through our website and through other social media.

Good health and peace,

Flavio F. Marsiglia
SIRC & CITIR Director
A Parent-Child Approach to Substance Abuse Prevention for Mexican American Youth

Principal Investigator: Flavio F. Marsiglia, PhD

In collaboration with the American Dream Academy, this study is implementing and testing an innovative and highly significant prevention program by integrating two existing school-based parent and youth interventions into a new community-based approach to prevent substance use among acculturating Mexican heritage youth. This research applies the ecodevelopmental approach to strengthen family functioning, reduce youth’s acculturative stress, and increase youth drug refusal skills. The guiding hypothesis is that by synchronizing the two interventions in a community-based setting, the intervention will yield stronger youth and parent desired outcomes and will be more cost-effective. This hypothesis is being tested through a randomized control trial (RCT) in a community-based setting. The RCT compares 1) The aligned Parent-Youth intervention; with 2) The Parent-Only intervention; and 3) Control (treatment as usual). The study also tests whether hypothesized mediators (e.g., family functioning, parenting skills and social support) and moderators (acculturation and acculturative stress) influence the program’s effectiveness. The findings will increase knowledge about sustainable and efficacious community-based prevention and about specific approaches to overcome barriers to prevention that are present in the changing social and school environments of the Southwest and the nation.

Updates:
- All the parent groups and the student classroom based sessions have been satisfactorily conducted.
- Completed waves 1, 2, and 3 on Cohorts 1 and 2 (N=376 parent-youth dyads)
- We are beginning wave 3 data collection in 9 schools for Cohort 3
- Data analysis is ongoing and several articles have been published

Every Little Step Counts: Efficacy Trial

Principal Investigator: Gabriel Shaibi, PhD

This study, using a randomized-controlled trial, tests the efficacy of a culturally-grounded, community-based diabetes prevention program to increase insulin sensitivity and weight-specific quality of life in 160 obese Latino adolescents. The study also explores potential mediators and moderators of the intervention’s effects and estimates the initial incremental cost-effectiveness of the intervention for increasing insulin sensitivity. The intervention is guided by Social Cognitive Theory and framed within a multilevel ecodevelopmental model to address surrounding contextual factors that are thought to influence health behaviors and health outcomes in obese Latino youth during a critical life period. The project builds upon earlier collaborations of a transdisciplinary team of investigators with the community to address critical gaps in how prevention interventions for obese Latino youth are developed, implemented, and evaluated. This innovative approach is an essential step in the development of cost-effective, solution-oriented programs to improve the health of Latino youth.

Updates:
- Enrollment and data collection are complete.
- Data cleaning and analysis are underway.
- Additional funding has been secured to adapt and evaluate the intervention for obese Latino youth with prediabetes (NHIN/NIDDK - R01 DK107579)
- Additional funding has been secured to further refine and test the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary efficacy among Latino families in Maryvale, AZ (Az Dept Health Services ADHS16- 105121)

Urban American Indian Youth Substance Use: Ecodevelopmental Influences

Principal Investigator: Stephen S. Kulis, PhD

This study addresses gaps in knowledge of how contextual factors operating at the peer, family/parental, school, and neighborhood/ community levels influence substance use among urban American Indian youth in Arizona. Using an ecodevelopmental theory, the study documents the relative influence of factors at these different levels using a comprehensive model. Tests how positive and negative family influences interact with those at other levels, and examines how they may operate differently in subgroups of urban American Indian youth defined by gender, grade level, and mixed or American Indian only heritage. The research uses a 2012 state-wide survey of youth substance use with sampling design, to engage an additional 800 members of urban American Indian youth (N=4,450) in 8th, 10th and 12th grade. The study contributes essential knowledge about how to target and deliver prevention interventions comprehensively by identifying issues faced by the growing majority of American Indian youth and their families who now live in urban areas.

Updates:
- Using latent class analysis (LCA), the research team identified distinctive patterns of substance use of 2,292 urban American Indian youth in the two largest metropolitan areas of Arizona. Results indicated that a 4-class LCA solution described their use of seven types of substances with the best model fit: (A) a large plurality of non-users (69%); (B) a substantial minority using alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana (17%); (C) a smaller group of poly/substances users consuming combinations of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, other illicit drugs, and prescription or OTC drugs (9%); and (D) a group using tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs, but not alcohol (4%).
- The team documented how ecodevelopmental influences on urban American Indians’ use of substances form latent constructs that crystallize into parallel positive and negative factors at the family, peer, school, and neighborhood levels. Two sets of these factors—negative family influences such as adult substance users in the family, and exposure to anti-social peers—are particularly strong predictors of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana use by the youths. Positive family and peer influences, such as parental attachment and involvement with prosocial peers, while having less direct influence, do significantly buffer or mitigate the negative effects of negative family and peer influences.

Culturally Grounded Prevention Research for Urban American Indians

Principal Investigator: Stephen S. Kulis, PhD

SIRC researchers and their community partners continue work to disseminate and extend the reach of our research to create and test culturally specific prevention programs for urban American Indian families. A comprehensive report was published (see publications below) on the efficacy of the Living in 2 Worlds prevention program for urban American Indian middle school students, showing desired effects of substance use behaviors and attitudes and strengthened cultural identification. Very positive results for the parallel Parenting in 2 Worlds for urban American Indian parents, tested in three Arizona cities, have prompted strong interest from urban Indian centers in other regions. Patricia Hibbard, CEO of the Phoenix Indian Center and Vice-Chair of the SIRC Community Advisory Board—and Stephen Kulis have visited Indian centers in Buffalo, Los Angeles, and St. Paul/Minneapolis to plan a nationwide effectiveness trial of P2W.
Community Engagement and Outreach Core

The Community Engagement and Outreach Core (CEOC) of the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) is the main conduit to implement effective new approaches of research findings to the public and for motivating and empowering communities to take charge of their health. Since its inception in 2007, the SIRC CEOC has promoted prevention and health education by targeting teachers and their work in the classrooms to prepare substance abuse among students. Every summer in June, SIRC engaged seventh and eighth grade students from the Phoenix Union High School District’s summer enrichment program, Science in the City. We have introduced nearly 90 students and teachers to behavioral and social science research and addressed health and health disparities. We thank our partners and volunteers: ASU College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI), CONHI Youth Advisory Board, CONHI Doctor of Nursing Practice, St. Vincent de Paul, American Diabetes Association; and master teachers and facilitators of the curricula: A Healthy You, a Healthy Science in the City.

Research Translation to Increase Health Literacy

In direct response to our Community Advisory Board (CAB), the CEOC has worked to translate research findings generated by SIRC’s research teams and affiliates into a language, format, and syntax appropriate for consumption by the general public. This action to increase community-wide health literacy allows SIRC and the CAB to deliver research findings to individuals, so they can obtain and process health information and recognize services needed to make appropriate health decisions. Together, SIRC and the CAB developed a series of Policy Briefs, adaptations of SIRC research publications that serve as conduits to inform about health consequences research, and describe promising policy solutions being tested and Research in Action, articles educate about health equity, prevention, and best evidence interventions that are relevant to communities in Arizona. These translation projects can be downloaded by accessing the main SIRC website.

Health Policy Advocacy

The Health Policy Advocacy program established a cadre of community health advocates who can enrich the capacity of communities to effectively advocate for responsive health policies and programs. Three cohorts of participants fulfilled 24 hours of training over a six-week period in Spring 2014, 2015, and 2016. They were equipped with skills to become active advocates to maintain relationships with policy makers, frame political messages, and connect with community groups and coalitions that address health disparities in the health care system in Arizona. A variety of panelists from legislators to news reporters were invited to share their experience in policymaking, the legislative process, and framing [policy] messages for various audiences. In the three cohorts, the advocacy program graduated 56 participants, representing a diverse scope of the community including state and local government departments, minority community agencies, higher learning institutions including Arizona State University, Midwestern University, and Grand Canyon University, and many other local and faith-based organizations. To continue reaching a broad audience, the Citizen and Community Advocacy training resources is available on SIRC’s website. The health advocacy program was designed by reputable public health advocates who have over 40 years of executive management, planning, program, advocacy, and public policy experience.

 Generating Interest in Health Disparities Careers

Recruitment and retention of minorities into social, behavioral, and health careers is a major priority for NIH, ASU, and SIRC. To support this goal, SIRC provided high school counselors resource books with information on health and health research career topics that can be shared with their students. Over fifty schools and school districts were provided with this information with the potential to reach over 80,000 high school students.

Community Fellows Training

In collaboration with our Community Advisory Board, the Research Education and Training Core has developed several workshops designed to build research capacity in the community. The latest event, a designing surveys workshop, was held on November 10, 2016. Presenters included Dr. Wendy Wolfenstieg and Katie Morales of the Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts. The workshop was open to members of the Community Advisory Board and staff from their affiliated agencies. Over sixty community members have completed our Community Fellows Training programs.

Health Equity Lecture Series

The Health Equity Lecture Series was designed to highlight and enhance health disparities expertise and challenges. ASU researchers from various disciplines with an interest in health disparities have presented the latest findings from the field and from their own research studies for these monthly presentations. Presenters include faculty, graduate students and community partners. Since 2013, over sixty presentations have been provided in-person and by webinar reaching approximately 1230 participants. All lectures are available on the SIRC website.

Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts

Identifying Older Adult Needs

Since October, the Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts worked with the Area Agency on Aging (Region 1) in conducting a needs assessment of older adults in Maricopa County to guide the development of a new four-year Area Plan. The Agency wanted to know what the major concerns were facing the older adult population, and what allows seniors to continue living in their homes. Information on older adults was collected via literature review, eight focus groups, and 378 community surveys. Major issues identified were around finances, transportation, and health careers is a major priority for NIH, ASU, and SIRC. To support this goal, SIRC provided high school that allows seniors to continue living in their homes. Information on older adults was collected via literature review, eight focus groups, and 378 community surveys. Major issues identified were around finances, transportation, and health disparities. Dr. Wolfersteig then co-facilitated a day-long strategic planning session with Agency managers to address the financial and transportation issues facing seniors.

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Enhancing Culturally-Informed Health Care Services for Women affected by Female Genital Cutting in Arizona

In July 2016, Dr. Cristina Johnson-Abgakwu was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health to address the gaps and problems in the Female Genital Cutting (FGC)-related health services for women living in the U.S. who have experienced FGC. The project is purposed toward building greater capacity among health and social service providers across Arizona to care for FGC-affected populations and build community knowledge and awareness of FGC-related health issues and available services. The official launch of the project in September involved a Kick-Off Luncheon attended by all project partners, including multiple Ethnic Community-Based Organizations, resettlement agencies, and health organizations.

Since its launch, the team has worked closely with community partners to complete the development of the Community Health Needs Assessment and has conducted a CITI certification training for its community mobilizers. Due to the lower literacy levels within the Somali and Somali-Bantu communities, the team took an innovative approach to allow the community mobilizers and social service providers to more easily obtain CITI certification. Pat Dustman developed an interactive curriculum on the topic of human subjects protections and led the 2.5 hour training for 30 members of our Phoenix and Tucson teams to receive their certification. Data collection is expected to begin in the field in early February.

FGM/C Management and Prevention

In collaboration with the World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, the Universities of Geneva, Brussels, and Montreal have organized a meeting of international experts on the topic of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Dr. Crista Johnson-Abgakwu served as a keynote on FGM/C healthcare experience and prevention efforts from the US context and presented on interventions to address sexual function in women affected by FGM/C with colleague Dr. Nicole Warren (Johns Hopkins University). The meeting was held March 13-14 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Children’s Action Alliance Honors Dr. Cristina Johnson-Abgakwu

Dr. Cristina Johnson-Abgakwu has been chosen to receive the Children’s Action Alliance Jacque Steiner Public Leadership Award. This award represents her dedication to address the medical needs of the refugee population in Arizona.

Children’s Action Alliance is an independent voice for Arizona children and families at the state capitol and in the community. Their focus is to represent her dedication to address the medical needs of the refugee population in Arizona.

18th International Congress on Addictions

The 18th International Congress on Addictions 2016 “New Challenges for the Prevention and Treatment of the Consumption of Drugs” hosted by Centros de Integración Juvenil, A.C. and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, provided academic-scientific exchange on topics related to drug policies, prevention, treatment, and training all centered on human rights and the health of children and youth. The event took place in Acapulco during the month of December. Dr. Flavio Marsiglia and our collaborating partner, Dr. Ricardo Sánchez Huertas, General Director of Mexico’s 5 Centros de Integración Juvenil, presented their work on “International Migration as a Factor for Mental Health” as part of this highly relevant international conference.

keepin’ it REAL in Mexico: An Adaptation and Multisite Trial (R01)

A bi-national research team comprised of researchers from the National Psychiatry Institute of Mexico, the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, the Milton H. Erickson Institute of Guadalajara, and ASU is underway analyzing and incorporating feedback from students and teachers on how to tailor the keepin’ it REAL curriculum to adolescents in Mexico’s three largest cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey. Salient themes related to the role of gender and violence in substance use came up frequently while collecting and analyzing feedback and data from students in teachers. In January 2017, the binational team convened in Phoenix, AZ for five days to devise a culturally adapted keepin’ it REAL curriculum. Their visit was highlighted on both Unixon Arizona and Telemundo Arizona.(click to view reports). The team will assess the newly adapted curriculum’s efficacy in a randomized control trial this summer. In addition, our partners in Monterrey and Mexico City are developing two educational videos to be integrated into the culturally adapted version of keepin’ it REAL.

FAMELO- Trip to Cuquío, Mexico

In February 2017, members of the Family Migration Contest and Early Life Outcomes (FAMELO-P01) study team convened in Jalisco, Mexico, to test the feasibility of conducting 5,000 door-to-door interviews with adults and adolescents in the summer of 2017. The interviews will assess the impact of migration on children and families in areas of high labor migration in Mexico, Nepal, and Mozambique. The research team in Mexico, led by Dr. Bertha Nuñez from the University of Guadalajara, tested a door-to-door survey protocol in the community of Cuquío, Jalisco. After three days of fine tuning and testing interview protocol and logistics, the team concluded that, with the expertise, input, and knowledge of local interviewers, visiting families door-to-door will be a success.

Welcome International Fellows

Yan Shi

Ph.D., Visiting Faculty, China

Yan Shi received her Ph.D. degree in sociology from Shanghai University in 2013. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Social Work at Zhejiang Gongshang University, China. Her main areas of research interests are family and gender focusing on the family changes in social transition.

Asma Yunus

M.A., MPH, Visiting Doctoral Scholar, Pakistan

Asma Yunus is a faculty member at the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab, Pakistan. She is working on her PhD synopsis in the area of Anthropology of Health and Illness. Her interest area is maternal and child health in rural areas of Pakistan.

Fulbright Specialist Roster

Dr. Flavio Marsiglia has been selected for the Fulbright Specialist Roster giving him the opportunity to consult and teach internationally through the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Institute of International Education’s Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES).
Washington DC to visit the office of the Council of Social Work Education, policy and service agencies facilitated by Howard University. The visit will also include a field trip to Agricultural University and Wuhan University, will visit local social service and government agencies and meet with faculty to discuss current and future collaboration opportunities on teaching, research, teacher training and student exchange programs. The visit will also include a field trip to Agricultural University and Wuhan University.

The ASU School of Social Work and CITIR in collaboration with the School of Social Work at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI will collaborate in the areas of sustainability, global health, social justice, technology and innovation. Sponsored by the PLuS Alliance, Drs. Flavio Marsiglia and Stephen Kulis from CITIR and other investigators from ASU visited UNSW in March, 2017 and met with different researchers and their community partners to advance a collaborative research agenda. The urban Aboriginal community of Sydney is a potential partner in a comparative health outcomes study with the Phoenix urban American Indian community.

The alliance is named after the cities of the three member universities: Phoenix, London & Sydney (PLuS). The PLuS Alliance creates, enables and deploys innovative research and education linkages across the three globally-focused universities to contribute to a sustainable future by collaborating in the areas of sustainability, global health, social justice, technology and innovation. Sponsored by the PLuS Alliance, Drs. Flavio Marsiglia and Stephen Kulis from CITIR and other investigators from ASU visited UNSW in March, 2017 and met with different researchers and their community partners to advance a collaborative research agenda. The urban Aboriginal community of Sydney is a potential partner in a comparative health outcomes study with the Phoenix urban American Indian community.

Social Work Education Exchange Forum

The ASU School of Social Work and CITIR in collaboration with the School of Social Work at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI will host the fourth annual conference on “Strengthening MSW Education in Central China: Diverse Experiences of US Universities,” April 16 – 19, 2017. The delegates, Deans and Faculty from our partner universities including China Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Huazhong Agricultural University, and Wuhan University, will visit local social service and government agencies and meet with faculty to discuss current and future collaboration opportunities on teaching, research, teacher training and student exchange programs. The visit will also include a field trip to Washington DC to visit the office of the Council of Social Work Education, policy and service agencies facilitated by Howard University.


SIRC and CITIR were co-sponsors of the 13th Annual César E. Chávez Conference. The conference, “Unite for Inclusion”, hosted by Terros Health featured workshops promoting the implementation, practice, adaptation and innovations for evidence-based or best practices in substance abuse treatment, behavioral health, integrated healthcare and health equity. Participants from the behavioral health field connected together to reflect on the values of Cesar Chavez and the opportunities to gain insight on how to effectively reach diverse populations in our communities.