Recent publications


Volume 11 Issue 2, Spring 2015

Greetings From Our Director

Dear friends and colleagues,

Happy New Year to all! 2015 is SIRC’s 19th anniversary as a research center and our 18th anniversary as a research team. Congratulations! As I look back I feel very proud of our accomplishments and as I look forward I feel excited and energized about the new opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. This Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) journey has produced many outstanding interventions. Each one of them are the result of fruitful and rewarding community partnerships. It is because of the active participation of all of you that SIRC’s interventions and programs speak to the needs of our communities and are being implemented across Arizona and by many other communities within the US as well as on a global level. With the help of our very active Community Advisory Board (CAB), we constantly monitor that the efficacious interventions we produce are accessible to the communities that need them the most. At the same time the different research teams continue with the implementation of several innovative and significant efficacy and effectiveness trials.

I am very happy to announce that our portfolio of research projects has been significantly expanded by a competitive supplement to our existing NIMHD/NIMH P20 award. This new award will expand SIRC’s center of excellence research portfolio to include two new pilot research projects. These studies will deepen our understanding of socio-cultural determinants of health, especially factors that create, reduce, and eliminate health disparities, by employing a multilevel social determinants of health framework. Congratulations to the Principal Investigators, community partners and teams! Read more about these studies on page three.

I encourage our community partners and faculty research affiliates to actively participate in our strategic planning efforts. During the spring semester you will receive ongoing research, including details on how you can participate in the process. I am confident that the strategic planning process we have designed together will result in a very strong road map for SIRC’s next five years. Thank you for your commitment and dedication, your ideas and participation are most welcome. Enjoy this issue of InFocus and please keep in touch.

Peace and health,
Flavio F. Marsiglia, Ph.D., SIRC Director
Distinguished Foundation Professor of Cultural Diversity and Health

SIRC highlights

Flavio F. Marsiglia, PhD, was elected to serve a two year term as President of the Association of Latino and Latin Social Work Educators (ALLSWE). ALLSWE is an organization for the development of education in Social Work especially among the Latino population. As an autonomous organization it strives to guarantee a mechanism for participation and representation in all matters that affect the work done in education and research in the field of Social Work and to promote the professional development of its members.

Four SIRC faculty affiliates named as 2015 Fellows of the Society for Social Work Research (SSWR), join Flavio Marsiglia, PhD, who was named in the first cohort of Fellows last year. The 4 new Fellows are: David Hodge, PhD, Stephen Kulis, PhD, Paul Smokowski, PhD, Lisa Rankin Williams, PhD. The SSSWR Fellows are members who have served with distinction to advance, disseminate, and translate research that addresses issues of social work practice and policy and promotes a diverse, equitable and just society. The Fellowship was established to recognize individual accomplishments, leadership and contribution to SSSWR as a scientific society. It is anticipated that SSSWR Fellows will serve as role models and mentors for individuals pursing careers in social work research and will continue to actively advance the mission of SSWR.

SIRC updates

Manténte REAL in Montevideo, Uruguay:

In collaboration with a local foundation, Uruguayan educational authorities, and the American embassy in Montevideo, SIRC conducted a pilot study to test the feasibility of implementing keepin’ it REAL in 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 poorest neighborhood in the capital school would need adaptation to the Uruguayan population.

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SIRC is Funded by: The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the National Institutes of Health (NIMHD/NIMH), award: P20MD002316 | The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the National Institutes of Health (NIMHD/NIMH), award: R01MD006110 | Arizona State University | Evaluation contracts with community partners

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SIRC Multi-site Feasibility Study in Mexico

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Invited Health Disparities Conference

SIRC and the College of Health Solutions sponsored an invited health disparities conference at the Arizona Science Center. Approximately 70 participants attended where key community leaders and health disparities ASU Faculty and ASU pre & post-doctoral students centered discussions on the conference theme of Fostering Collective Impact to Eliminate Health Disparities. Prominent and active ASU investigators, who focus on outcomes relevant to Maricopa County health priorities, were invited to explore ways so that further collaboration might emerge. ASU conference presenters were: Crista Johnson-Agbakwu, MD, Gabriel Shults, PhD, Adriana Umaña-Taylor, PhD, Tamara Underin, PhD, Selene Szikszinski-Quiroga PhD, Christopher Wharton, PhD, Punam Ohri-Vachaspati, PhD and Paul Smokowski, PhD. The invited community leaders represented a broad range of health and cultural services that provide assistance and resources to those experiencing health disparities. Community leaders included: Yeonne Forther (Native American Connections), Dr. Elizabeth Ortiz de Valdez (Concilio Latino), Patty Hibbeler (Phoenix Indian Center), Estela Barraza (PIKìos), Dr. Katherine Coo (IU Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health), Essen Otu (Mountain Park Health Center), Teresa Peña (Mercy Maricopa) and Luis Samudio (Phoenix Police Department). The event’s table talk discussions created different perspectives among academicians and community leaders; it fostered partners’ collaboration; generated interdisciplinary discussions with community partners and academia, and opened future engagement opportunities.

Health Education Program in Africa

As part of a Global Initiative sponsored by SIRC, Dr. Janelle Walker and Joanne Nizigiyimana, Program Manager for the Refugee Women’s Health Clinic (RWHC) in Arizona, travel to Burundi, Africa to learn about health issues faced by women survivors of war who are either internally displaced, affiliated with ex-combatant or returnees (repatriates). The long term goal of this health education initiative is to reduce health disparities through culturally and gender specific health interventions sustainable in the urban and rural communities of Burundi. This would first be achieved through a needs assessment of the community. Using a community-based participatory research approach, this program will focus on several culturally sensitive dimensions of wellness (spiritual, mental, and physical) important for health behavior. This work may also provide the opportunity to compare health changes between those still in the native country to those who have left and reside in other countries (e.g. the United States). Additionally, the information collected could be transformative for disease prevention.

SIRC in Guatemala

In 2010, it was discovered from a comprehensive needs assessment for the city of Guatemala that “prevention” as a specific public health approach was an unknown concept in both city and schools. María Porta, General Director of a private non-profit organization, contacted SIRC to request assistance to implement the school-based prevention program Manténte REAL (the Spanish language version of KiR) in a small number of schools in Guatemala. In a 2011 pilot project, María recruited 2 schools in the “red zones” of the city. “Red zones” are areas in which both the crime rate and the rates of violence against people and property are the greatest. The teachers were trained and certified in how to deliver Manténte REAL to students in the classroom. The results of the pilot were substantial and more schools expressed an interest in the prevention program. Due to the increased demand, María and SIRC decided to move forward with a randomized effectiveness trial that included additional schools. In 2012, the project expanded to include 7 schools that had been randomized by size while ensuring that all sites were in the red zones. The second full year of the effectiveness study was completed in October 2014 and plans are underway for Year 3 with an increased number of teacher training sessions starting in March 2015.

American Indian Recognition Event

SIRC, the Phoenix Indian Center and the Urban Indian Coalition of Arizona celebrated a successful collaboration on a culturally grounded parenting program with a special recognition event in September.

The program, Parenting in 2 Worlds (P2W) was developed at SIRC specifically for urban American Indian families. The event brought together community members, project staff, and researchers who have worked together for four years to create and test P2W with the help of over 600 families from urban Indian communities in Flagstaff, Phoenix, and Tucson. In addition to launch the group shared lessons learned in strengthening Native families and the initial study results of the effectiveness of the P2W curriculum.

SIRC Awarded Funding for New Pilots

NIH has awarded SIRC competitive funding to support the implementation of additional pilots. This new NIH funding will expand SIRC’s center of excellence research portfolio to include two new pilot research projects. These pilots will significantly expand SIRC’s current efforts and will generate new knowledge that can result in specific improvements on the health and well-being of racial/ethnic minorities of the Southwest.

The first pilot study, The Role of Refugee Mothers’ Experiences with Trauma and Forced Migration on Child Emotional and Behavioral Health, explores how Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee parents’ pre- and post-migration experiences influence family dynamics and youth behavioral and mental health outcomes. The study investigates how parental involvement, parent-child communication, and parent-child conflict are influenced by parents’ pre- and post-migration challenges.

The second pilot study, Unintended Consequences for Minority Health at a Time of Changing Immigration Policy and Economic Conditions, seeks to understand how economic and socio-political change affects health care use for Latinos. The study investigates the temporal variation on health care utilization surrounding key immigration and economic events in recent years. Principal Investigator for this project is Cindy Sangalang, PhD, ASU, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work.

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Flavio F. Marsiglia and Dr. Stephen Kulik will join other researchers in Monterrey, Mexico on January 31, 2015 for an all day up meeting with the multi-site feasibility study with Mexico. Dra. Bertha Nuñó-Gutierrez will provide updates for the Guadalajara site. Dr. Miguel Angel Mendoza Melendez will report on the Mexico City feasibility study with Mexico. Dra. Bertha Nuñó-Gutierrez will provide updates for the Guadalajara site. Dr. Miguel Angel Mendoza Melendez will report on the Mexico City feasibility study with Mexico.

Recent publications

SIRC - Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center | 411 N. Central Avenue, Suite 720 Phoenix, AZ 85004-0693 | Phone: 602-496-0700 | Fax: 602-496-0958
sirc.asu.edu

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