

Developing a Program for Research Ambassadors in Diverse Community Settings: Opportunities to Diversify Research Participation

Presenters

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Thematic Area Methods of Engaging Underrepresented and Underserved Populations in Research

Abstract

Despite efforts to increase the representation of minority populations in research, there continues to exist disparities in research participation among ethnic and racial minorities. Reasons for this disparity include: limited exposure to information about research; access to care; cultural and linguistic barriers; and social histories resulting in mistrust and misunderstandings about the research process. As medicine continues to advance, treatments and personalized medicine call for participation of people of all ages, race and ethnicities to correct these disparities. To address these barriers, innovative approaches are needed to fully engage diverse communities in participation in translational research.

This learning lab will provide guidance on how to develop a community-engaged approach to increasing scientific literacy and understanding of research in diverse communities –through the training and deployment of indigenous *Research Ambassadors*. Using our own experience working with Latino communities in Southern California, we will provide step-by-step guidance on how to develop a Research 101 curriculum that can be delivered by promotoras/community health workers in community settings. By providing community members tools to better understand the research process and the benefits to clinical research, we believe we can address the social and cultural barriers to research participation.

The community engagement programs from 4 CTSA hubs and health educators from a community health clinic developed a curriculum designed to provide promotoras the skills to serve as agents of change in promoting the promise that health research has for diverse communities. Two working groups of promotoras reviewed the curriculum for content, feasibility, cultural appropriateness and relevance to their work. The manual was then given to IRB administrators and faculty from three universities to review for accuracy, comprehensiveness and overall impressions as a tool.

Learning Objectives

- 1) Develop a community-engaged approach to increase scientific literacy and understanding of research in diverse communities
- 2) Identify opportunities for research ambassadors in diverse settings

Schedule

- 1) A Multidisciplinary Approach to Developing a Research 101 Curriculum for the Community: A Case Study from Southern California Community Engagement - 20 minutes
- 2) Participation in one of the curriculum's interactive activities: *Cookie and Carrot Tooth Experiment* - 20 minutes
- 3) Train the trainer, outreach into diverse communities and workshops to disseminate the information through a research ambassador program - 15 minutes
- 4) Interactive activity #2: Using this approach in different communities (e.g., African American, aging/senior, pediatric and adolescents, Asian populations) - 20 minutes
- 5) Evaluating changes in communities': 1) knowledge about research; 2) perceptions of research; 3) willingness to participate in research; 4) enrollment in clinical research - 10 minutes