PROMOTING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING ON HEALTH DISPARITIES ISSUES (ProDIGS)

2009 Grantees:



Kisha Braithwaite Holden, PhD, Assistant Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine and Associate Director for Community Voices for the Underserved, was awarded $6500.00 for her research project focused on Understanding Depression among Diverse African American Women. Dr. Holden's project will involve a diverse cross-section of 60 low, middle and upper income African American women over the age of 18 from the greater Atlanta metro area and utilize Master's of Public Health students to explore (a) the relationship between depressive symptoms and the prevalence and predictors of increased vulnerability as indicated by psychological factors such as cognitive style, self concept, stress, and socio-cultural factors; and, (b) develop culturally relevant strategies to increase understanding of depression.



Elizabeth Diane Cordero, PhD, from San Diego State University (SDSU), Imperial Valley proposed research on Latinas, Body Image, and Breast-Cancer Surgery that will explore the impact of perceptions of beauty, self-esteem, and familiarity on attitudes and opinions of Latinas who have mastectomy scars and determine whether decisions regarding methods of treatment are influenced by identified sociocultural phenomena. The study will utilize a sample of Latino/a undergraduate students from SDSU and Imperial Valley community members at least 18 years of age who will be exposed to randomly assigned photographs of famous and non-famous Latinas with and without mastectomy scars. SDSU undergraduates will be recruited to assist with the execution of the project and will complete an online tutorial on appropriate research techniques and research ethics when working with human subjects. Dr. Cordero will receive $5220 for her research.



Sara Chiara Haden, PhD, Assistant Professor at Long Island University was awarded $6,000 for her proposal entitled Community Violence Exposure Prevalence and Outcomes among Urban Young Adults. Dr. Haden's multi-phased research seeks to "expand the research on risk and protection factors related to adverse mental health outcomes of exposure to community violence". The study will involve 60 young adults aged 18-24 residing in identified urban areas, and include psychophysiological measures of heart rate and salivary cortisol while subjects are exposed to increased stress. The specific goals of the overall project are to evaluate the prevalence and severity of differing forms of community violence exposure of young urban adults, assess and predict outcomes related to community violence, and test the extent to which perceptions of social support and coping styles are related to community violence exposure.



Kevin L. Nadal, PhD, Assistant Professor and Deputy Director of the Forensic Mental Health Counseling Program at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice - City University of New York proposed a study on Mental Health Impacts of Microaggressions that seeks to develop quantitative measures of racial microaggressions for the encouragement of future studies on the detrimental impact of such actions. The study will initially utilize approximately 150 respondents recruited online to complete an open-ended survey whose results will be used to develop a second questionnaire that will be disseminated to approximately 300-400 individuals to test for correlation and construct validity. Assistance will be provided by two Masters' level students in forensic and counseling psychology who will perform research tasks associated with the study including recruitment of participants, dissemination and data collection, data entry, attend research meetings and other related tasks. Dr. Nadal was awarded $6500.00.

2008 GRANTEES:



Marie Hammond, PhD, of Tennessee State University received $6500.00 for her project, "Personality Factors and Mental Health Problems among African Americans and Whites: A Pilot Study." The study proposes to evaluate the viability of using an online human subjects database for gathering data from community mental health center clients and evaluate the impact of personality on presenting symptoms of 50 adult African American and 50 adult White patients at a community-based mental health clinic with the end goal of improving diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders and mental health issues for this identified population. The study will also evaluate the efficacy of using human subject pool management software as an enhancement to gathering data gathering thus continuing to test the relationship between personality and symptoms using an online assessment completion.



Wendi Williams, PhD, of Long Island University is researching "Project Sister Circle" which will focus on physical and mental health disparities among African descent women and girls through the promotion of wellness attitudes and behaviors while investigating the psychosocial and sociocultural factors that influence health behaviors and attitudes among this population. Outcomes of physical, mental health and psychosocial adjustment outcomes will be examined using eight to 10 adolescent girls attending an urban school for grades K-8 after an 8-week intervention centering on an integrative counseling intervention which integrates psychosocial spiritual components. Dr. Williams project is funded for $6500.00.

2007 GRANTEES:



Ekwenzi Gray, PhD, Director, Drug Education and Prevention Program, at Howard University in Washington, DC. Dr. Gray's research titled *Personal and Cultural Factors Influencing Black College Student Attitudes Toward Seeking Mental Health Treatment,* will "examine personal factors such as acculturation, cultural discrimination, exposure to mental heath services, and their influence on attitudes toward seeking mental health treatment.



Hollie Jones, PhD, Coordinator, City University of New York's (CUNY)' Campaign Against Diabetes, Center for Human Environments Graduate Center, will examine *The Relationship between Medical Mistrust, Perceptions of Healthcare Discrimination and Self-Care Behaviors among Ethnic Minorities with Type 2 Diabetes.* The proposed study will explore the relationship between perceptions of healthcare discrimination, medical mistrust, and diabetes lifestyle choices (i.e., diet, exercise and diabetes medication adherence) among Black and Hispanics students aged 40 and over with Type II diabetes.



Assistant Professor **Debbiesiu Lee, PhD**, of the University of Miami – *Reducing Mental Health Disparities by Training for Cultural Competence*. This project seeks to increase the cultural competence of mental health professionals through emphasis on increased cognitive flexibility and the appropriate application of cultural knowledge to new situations.

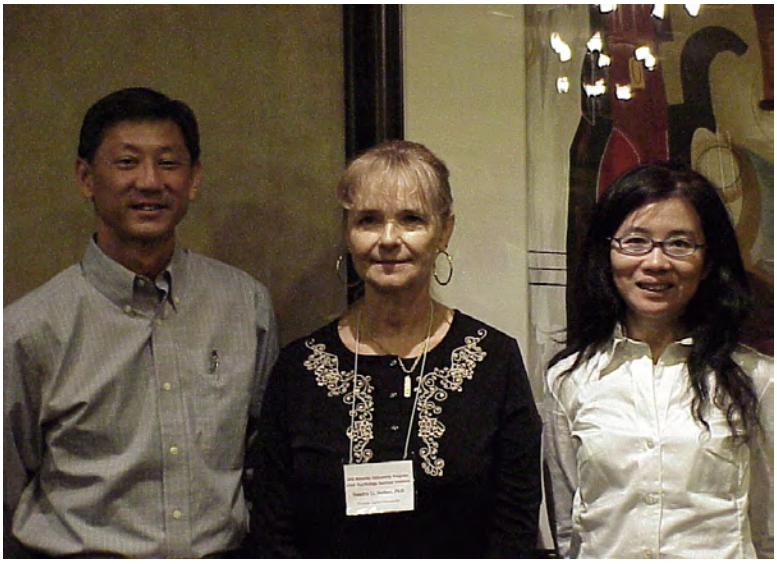


Assistant Professor **Regina Miranda, PhD**, of Hunter College of the City University of New York will study *Assessing Acculturative Stress and Perceived Discrimination as Predictors of Suicidality and Attitudes Toward Mental Health Treatment among an Ethnically-Diverse Sample of College Students*. This study seeks to identify ethnic differences on rates of suicidal thinking, behavior, and the pursuit of mental health treatment among ethnic college students, and examines the impact of acculturative stress and perceived discrimination on suicidal thoughts and attitudes for seeking mental health treatment.



Assistant Professor **Juliana van Olphen, PhD**, from San Francisco State University will pursue research, titled, *Developing a Community-Based Participatory Research Proposal to Explore the Impact of Stigma on the Health of Women Leaving San Francisco County Jail*. This project attempts to assess the relationship between stigma, personal experiences and perceptions, and drug and mental health problems faced by women released from the San Francisco jail within the last six months, and to identify pathways and priorities for intervention for improved health, ease of community reintegration and reduced reentry to the criminal justice system.

2006 GRANTEES:



(left to right) Patrick Uchigakiuchi, PhD, Sandra Suther, PhD, and Ruth Chao, PhD

Ruth Chao, PhD, Assistant Professor from Tennessee State University's Multiculturally Sensitive Mental Health Checklist: Development, Factor Analysis, Reliability, and Validity will develop a mental health checklist that is multiculturally sensitive and includes racism-related stressors for ethnic minority students who are experiencing psychological problems, and to study the psychometric properties and reliability and validity of the checklist through identified statistical analyses.

Patrick Uchigakiuchi, PhD, Associate Professor from the Chaminade University of Honolulu's Research and Training Proposal to Increase Minority Mental Health Professionals Among Asian and Pacific Islander Groups seeks to utilize a two-pronged approach to create a research and training program track at the early stages of undergraduate education to increase the number of mental health professionals from Asian and Pacific Islander groups (including Hawaiians, Samoans, Filipinos, and Micronesians) through attainment of specific research skills focused on educational advancement and the development of a certificate program through the Department of Psychology in behavioral counseling and the development of a clinical training

track to train mental health counselors to work with communities with large populations of underserved Asian and Pacific Islanders

Sandra Suther, PhD, Assistant Professor and Levi Ross, PhD, Assistant Professor from Florida A & M University propose to develop "Formative Research to Develop a Genetic Health Education Curriculum" at FAMU through a multi-pronged approach that includes: the establishment of a Genetic Health Education Curriculum advisory board; identification of interdisciplinary faculty across FAMU with expertise in genetic health education curriculum as instructors; and the examination of current and existing public health genetics curricula to identify components for possible integration into the proposed curriculum. This course would be the first genetic health education course to be included into the curriculum of a degree earning program at a college or university within the Florida State University system.

2005 Grantees:



APA/NIGMS Project Administrator, Sonja Preston (far left) and OEMA Director, Bertha G. Holliday (far right) with 2005 ProDIGs Grantees (left to right): Daniel Cukor, PhD; Veda Brown, PhD; Ann Yali, PhD; Lisa Sanchez Johnsen, PhD; Tiffany Floyd, PhD; Scyatta Wallace, PhD

Assistant Professor, **Veda E. Brown, PhD** of Prairie View A&M University, will examine Mental, Social, and Emotional Factors Associated with Economically Disadvantaged Adolescents' Violent/Aggressive Behavioral Patterns: Middle School Students' Reported Beliefs About their Self Worth, Relationship with Peers, Adult Role Models and Value of A Good Quality Education and the Importance of Sound Communication with Parents. Dr. Brown's research involves 100-150 identified economically disadvantaged African American and Hispanic adolescents in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade and will examine the critical factors of and risk behaviors associated with aggressive and violent behavioral patterns in low-income and/or predominately ethnic schools in rural and large urban communities. The proposed study will also focus on identification of processes and approaches for improving diagnosis, prevention, and the treatment of these identified aggressive behaviors.

Assistant Professor, **Daniel Cukor, PhD**, from SUNY Downstate Medical Center, will focus on the Psychological Assessment of African Americans on Dialysis. The proposed research seeks to explore the emotional state of 50 African Americans patients with end stage renal disease (ESRD) in an inner-city dialysis center. The prevalence of depression and the patients' quality of life will be assessed. Dr. Cukor's study will also seek to understand what culturally specific factors have impacted their quality of life.

Assistant Professor, **Tiffany D. Floyd PhD** of The City College of New York, will study The Effect of Family Communication on Cancer Screening Behaviors of African Americans and Latinos. Dr. Floyd's research will explore how varying levels of general, health-specific, and cancer-specific communication within families relates to the cancer screening behaviors of individual family members. By explaining how family communications can serve to promote cancer screening among African Americans and Latinos, this research can help reduce the uneven burden of cancer experienced by these populations.

Assistant Professor, **Lisa Sanchez-Johnson, PhD** from the Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i, will examine the Cultural Variables in Latino-Centered Obesity Assessment by exploring the role of acculturation, acculturative stress, ethnic identity and cultural values as these affect diet, physical activity and body images of 60 Latinas ages 25-65. The proposed study will also identify practical considerations regarding the development of a culturally proficient obesity intervention using the identified population.

Assistant Professor, **Scyatta Wallace, PhD** of SUNY Downstate Medical Center, will lead a curriculum development effort entitled Project SMART: A University-Community Partnership to Develop a Health Disparities Research Course for High School Students. Dr. Wallace's project seeks to develop a research curriculum that will educate and expose ethnic minority high school students to issues of health disparities, psychological and behavioral approaches to eliminating health disparities, behavioral health research, and behavioral research careers. The goal of Project SMART is to encourage these students to seek and pursue behavioral research careers that address health disparities.

Assistant Professor, **Ann Marie Yali, PhD** of The City College of New York, will assess Religious Comforts and Strains in Low Income Cancer Survivors. The purpose of the ongoing pilot project is to examine the construct validity of religious comfort and strain in a diverse sample of cancer patients. Dr. Yali's long term objective is to develop and validate a population appropriate measure of religious comfort and strain with psychometric properties necessary for use in longitudinal natural history and intervention studies of cancer patients.

2004 GRANTEES:

Assistant Professor **Carlotta Arthur**, PhD of Meharry Medical College will examine *Psychological Stress, Optimism and Wound Healing in African Americans*. Dr. Arthur's research will survey 60 low-income African American adult male and female oral surgery patients of the Meharry Medical College Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic and initiate a pilot study on the relationship among stress, optimism and wound healing.

Assistant Professor **Ling-Chuan Chu, PhD** from Delaware State University will focus on *Body Image and Weight-related Issues among African American College Students*. The proposed research seeks to use focus groups methods to explore the effect of body image on African American college students' perceptions of weight-related issues and strategies for motivating such college students to lose and maintain weight. The study will also introduce group interventions to help African American college students maintain a health life style, and prevent weight gain.

Assistant Specialist **Su Yeong Kim, PhD** of the Center on the Family, University of Hawaii at Manoa, will examine *Adolescent Adjustment in Chinese Immigrant Families* by investigating contemporaneous relationships among parent-child acculturation discrepancy, unsupportive parenting and adolescent adjustment in Chinese immigrant families and collecting and analyzing the second and third wave of data of an on-going study involving 400 families. These data will be used in testing a causal model where initial levels of parent-child acculturation discrepancy predict the quality of parenting practices and adolescent adjustment and explore whether parent gender, adolescent gender and adolescent translating activities moderate the proposed relationships.

Assistant Professor **Glen Milstein, PhD** of The City College of The City University of New York will assess *Church-Based Intervention to Reduce Mental Illness Stigma and the Disparity of Mental Health Care among Latinos* through conduct of a bilingual study of a church-based intervention of 64 Latinos designed to reduce mental illness stigma and increase willingness to seek mental health care in the Washington Heights section of New York. Psychology students from City College will assist in conducting this study.

Assistant Professor **Susan Sy**, PhD, of Mount St. Mary's College will survey 250 Latina daughters of immigrant families to gain a better understanding of stress-related risk and protective factors that promote mental health resiliency in this population during their transition to adulthood. Her proposed study on *Mental Health in Daughters of Immigrant Families* will utilize undergraduate students from Mount St. Mary's core psychology courses in the development, administration, and analysis of the core survey and provide these students structured coursework on minority mental health research.

2003 GRANTEES:

Assistant Professor **Jocelyn Turner-Musa** from Morgan State University's will focus the *Impact of family religious/spiritual beliefs on enhancing mental and physical health outcomes among African Americans with chronic kidney disease.* This study will survey 50 African American families with an adult member diagnosed with chronic renal disease treated by outpatient hemodialysis, assess the extent to which religious beliefs aggregate within a family, and examine whether these beliefs influence mental health outcomes of these patients with end-state renal disease. In addition, Dr. Turner-Musa will conduct an extensive literature review that will be used to develop an annotated bibliography of recent research in the area of family process, social support, religiosity/spirituality, and chronic illness between African Americans and solicit the consultation of two identified experts the field of chronic renal failure and interventions with African Americans confronted with chronic illness. Dr. Turner Musa identified, Paul Kimmell, MD, a professor at George Washington University Medical Center and former Director of Diabetic Nephropathy and HIV Programs at the National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) and Faye Belgrave, PhD, Professor Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University who has expertise in the area of culture in the context of preventive interventions respectively. Both are well published in their identified fields. Dr. Turner-Musa also anticipates one manuscript will be developed based on the findings of the proposed investigation and submitted for publication. To achieve her goals, Dr. Turner-Musa was awarded $6,500.

Assistant Professor **Jeffery L. Kibler** of Jackson State University will examine *Alcohol use, post-traumatic stress and risky sexual behaviors*. This study will assess the association between PTSD symptoms and sexual risk behaviors and the mediating role of alcohol use using a sample of 40 African American woman age 18 years and older with high levels of PTSD symptoms. Dr. Kibler hypothesizes that PTSD symptom level will be positively associated with sexual behavior, and alcohol use will mediate the relationship between PTSD symptom level and risky sexual behavior using scores greater than 44, as indexed by the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist -Civilian version (PCL-C). The selection of African American women as the study sample is based on the exceedingly high and increasing rate of heterosexual HIV contraction in this population. Dr. Kibler was awarded $6,900.

Chair, Assistant Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator **Lera Joyce Johnson** of Virginia State University will focus her efforts on the *Virginia State University Collaborative Minority Serving Institution Sexually Transmitted Disease Research Program* that will hire two graduate assistants who will survey the research literature related to adolescent sexual behavior and related interventions, and conduct focus groups with 48 persons related to their knowledge of STDs, peer influence on risky sexual behavior and other associated issues. The long range goals of the project are to strengthen the sexually transmitted disease research capacity of ethnic minority serving institutions; develop effective peer involvement intervention techniques in social and behavioral change; increase student knowledge about STD symptoms, transmission and containment; and address the racial and ethnic disparity health issue surrounding STD's through

a decrease in the prevalence of STD's on ethnic minority serving institutions campuses in the Southeast United States. Dr. Johnson received $6,500 to support her project.

Associate Professor **Phyllis Ford-Booker** of North Carolina A&T University will study *Health Disparities in African American at Risk for Coronary Health Disease: Factors Influencing Treatment Seeking Behaviors.* This study will in include development and testing of an interview protocol related to the socioeconomic factors, (e.g., low income, lack of private medical insurance, access to medical care); demographic factors, (e.g., age, gender, marital status, education); and psychosocial factors, (e.g., attitudes, cultural beliefs, knowledge about CVD) that may impede the seeking of treatment by African Americans showing sighs of possible coronary disease. The protocol will be administered to a sample of 100 African Americans demographically similar to those who present for medical treatment of cardiovascular disease. Dr. Ford-Booker was awarded $6,600.

Assistant Professor **Safiya Omari** of Jackson State University seeks to *Explore the Psychosocial, Cultural, and Environmental Correlates of Obesity and Overweight in Black Women in Mississippi* by surveying 40 African American women 18 years of age or older residing in Jackson, Mississippi. The study seeks to facilitate the identification of issues of importance to understanding obesity and overweight, and the complexity of the interactions among the noted factors, and will seek to address questions related to the specific factors that impede the salience of the negative health implications of being overweight and obese in this population such that weight loss and exercise are viewed as unimportant. It is expected that examinations of the narratives of the participants will reveal themes related to psychosocial, cultural and environmental factors that support the prevalence of overweight and obesity in this population and the nature of their associations with psychological factors such as resilience, self-esteem, health locus of control and life satisfaction, and sociocultural facts related to acculturation and food preferences. Dr. Omari received $6000.

The 2002 and 2003 grantees will attend a mandatory 4-day professional development institute hosted by the APA's Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) on July 16-19, 2003 in Washington, D.C. (Each ProDIGs grantee is provided up to an additional $1500 for related travel expenses.) During the Psychology Summer Institute (PSI) ProDIGs grantees' concept papers will be critiqued, major trends in health disparities research and prevention will be discussed, and opportunities to network with federal funding program directors and research institute staff will be provided. An exciting component of the PSI will provide ProDIGs grantees one-on-one mentoring experiences and opportunities to discuss and exchange information with identified experts and federal representatives from agencies that focus on their areas of research. Federal representatives from National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Health, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) will be asked to participate and to mentor the ProDIGs grantees.

2002 GRANTEES

Assistant Professor **Vicki Mack** of Clark Atlanta University will focus on the Analysis of African American Adolescents' attitudes toward healthy-eating and lifestyle, their healthful behaviors, and their awareness and concerns about cancer. This study will seek to examine the attitudes and behaviors related to healthy eating and lifestyle among African -American adolescents of varying socioeconomic status. The study also will look at the influences of support from others, knowledge of the benefits of healthful behaviors, knowledge of the disparities, experiences with cancer, and parental influences on healthful behaviors. The objectives of the study will be accomplished by conducting a survey of 100 African-American adolescents from the Atlanta Metropolitan area who range in age from 14-18 years. A second instrument or subscale will be used to validate the instrument. Dr. Mack was awarded $7,000.

Assistant Professor **Angela Farris-Watkins** of Spelman College will assess *HIV/AIDS prevention at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* by surveying a sample of HBCUs's regarding their use of campus-focused HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention strategies. The study seeks to determine the extent to which HBCUS's are engaged in HIV/AIDS prevention, examine HIV/AIDS prevention strategies that are exercised at a representative sampling of HBCUS's, determine general areas of need with respect to HIV/AIDS prevention (i.e., information, intervention, resources, and evaluations), and engage Spelman College students in health research with HIV/AIDS prevention for purposes of personal merit and significant scholarship. External support will be given by the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education's (NAFEO) Division of Health, a federally funded organization that has developed a system of programs, activities, and guidelines to mobilize and educate HBCUS student populations. NAFEO has established relationships with over 100 HBCUS's nationwide, including Spelman and will provide key informant contact information to the project on twenty-five HBCUS's, representing a range of general U.S. regions. Dr. Farris-Watkins was awarded $7,000.