

Angelica P. Herrera, M.P.H., Dr.P.H.

Dr. Angelica P. Herrera is a Kellogg Health Scholar in Health Disparities at the UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the Center for Research on Minority Health. She has 13 years of health promotion and health education experience with medically underserved and ethnic minority communities in the areas of HIV/AIDS, cancer prevention and control, and healthy eating. She holds a Doctorate of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) in Health Education with an emphasis in Health Administration from Loma Linda University, a B.S. in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and an M.P.H. in Epidemiology from the University at Albany, New York. She has recently published work on the cultural influences of long-term care use in Mexican-American elderly, and the role of religiosity on depression and physical health of caregivers.

Dr Herrera is currently investigating the availability of family and instrumental support to care of older Mexican-Americans in the home, and the impact of functional decline on their care and living arrangements using the Hispanic Established Populations for Epidemiologic Studies of the Elderly (HEPESE), as well as examining the impact of social support on Latino caregivers' emotional and physical well-being. With the Eliminating Disparities in Clinical Trials (EDICT) initiative, she is compiling consensus from experts and policy recommendations for increasing the recruitment and retention of minority/older adults into clinical trials.

Her research interests are in developing family-centered geriatric care models to improve the chronic disease management of a frail, older minority aging population and their family caregivers, developing community-based programs that promote awareness of depression, mental health and well-being in older adults, and examining ways of integrating civic engagement into physical activity health promotion programs targeting seniors.

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Abstract

Latino Aging and Health Disparities

Dr Angelica P. Herrera will discuss the policy and practical implications of current research in Latino aging, and how they inform efforts to reduce health disparities in a growing aging population. She will review research findings from her published work on “Cultural Determinants of Long-term Care Service Use in Mexican-American Family Caregivers” and “The Influence of Religious Coping on Caregiver Well-being”, which examine the role of familism (e.g. expectation to care for aging relatives), gender roles, and religiosity as important predictors of depression, mental and physical health, and decisions to utilize home- and community-based services.

She will highlight the purpose, design, and preliminary results of a community assessment as part of a federal initiative under way, “Improving Hispanic Elders’ Health: Community Partnerships for Evidence-Based Solutions,” which seeks to develop evidence-based interventions that reduce health disparities in Hispanic elderly in a multi-phased project guided by principles of community-based participatory research. Dr Herrera describes the development of policy recommendations through the initiative, Eliminating Disparities in Clinical Trials (EDICT) to improve the participation of ethnic minority older adults in clinical trials. Recommendations address multiple barriers, such as ageism, cognitive impairment and health literacy in older adults and caregivers in clinical trials, exclusion criteria/study design flaws, and state and national healthcare policies and insurance coverage that hamper elders’ participation.

Lastly, she will discuss the cultural determinants of care and living arrangements in very old adults of Mexican-origin. This study is particularly concerned with the way that functional decline and family resources (e.g. economic and informal support) vary by immigration factors, such as nativity, generational status, and acculturation, in determining changes in living arrangements (e.g. living alone, with family, or institutionalization).