Reducing Cancer Health Disparities through Collaborative Strategies: The Ponce School of Medicine (Puerto Rico) and Moffitt Cancer Center (Florida) Partnership

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An academic partnership between Ponce School of Medicine (PSM) in Ponce, PR and Moffitt Cancer Center (MCC) in Tampa, FL

- Established to: build joint research infrastructure; understand and address cancer health disparities and sub-ethnic differences; educate and train health professionals to provide cultural competent health care; develop and maintain community centered cancer education and resources in Ponce, PR and Tampa.
- This presentation will focus on lessons learned in partnership education and training activities
Ponce School of Medicine, Ponce PR

Ponce School of Medicine (PSM)

- Located in Ponce, PR
- 1977 - Medical school
- 1988 - Graduate Program
- 2001 - Ambulatory Center for Medical Research (CAIMED)

- Currently:
  - Faculty: 344
  - Medical students: 277
  - Graduate Students: 392
Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa FL

Moffitt Cancer Center (MCC)

- Opened in 1986 as a 162-beds cancer hospital, currently it has 206 beds (around 17,000 patients treated/year).
- Started Research in 1994, and now it has 150 research faculty and $60 million in grant funding.
- Scientific programs include: Molecular Oncology and Drug Discovery, Immunology, Experimental Therapeutics, Cancer Epidemiology and Health Outcomes and Behavior
U54 Goals:

Reduce cancer health disparities by:
- Increasing knowledge
- Identifying access barriers
- Developing targeted treatments

This will be accomplished by strengthening the infrastructure
- PSM- Cancer Research
- MCC- Cancer Health Disparities
Ponce School of Medicine Moffitt Cancer Center Partnership

Outreach Core

- MCC: Dr. Gwen Quinn  PSM: Dr. Julio Jimenez

- Goal: Community-focused educational activities to increase awareness of cancer prevention, early detection, treatment programs, and cancer research for Hispanics in Tampa, FL and Ponce, PR.

- Community Advisory Panel, community needs and resource assessment, and educational events
  - Outreach Program
  - Outreach Research Pilot Project
PSM-MCC Partnership Outreach Pilot Program

OUTREACH PROGRAM

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- CAP meetings
- Community forums
- Focus groups

EDUCATION ON CANCER CONTROL AND PREVENTION
- Educational events
- Health Fairs/Symposia
- Need assessment

CAPACITY BUILDING
- Community/Researcher forums (“The Bridge”)
- Focus groups
- Career development
Outreach Activities

Ponce

- Community Advisory Panel (Tampa and Ponce)
- Participation in community health fairs (Tampa and Ponce)
- Educational events (Tampa and Ponce)
- Community forums (Ponce)
- Salud serie de charlas (Tampa)
- Community needs and resource assessments (Ponce)
Ponce School of Medicine
Moffitt Cancer Center Partnership

Hablemos de Cancer Education Event
The Bridge Forum
Community Engagement Forum

Research Core

- Pilot Projects
  - Uncovering Breast Cancer Predisposition Factors in Puerto Rico (Drs. Monteiro and Dutil)
  - Identifying Cancer Health Communication Channels for Hispanic Audiences (Drs. Quinn and Jimenez)

- Full project
  - Molecular Biology of Lung Cancer among Puerto Ricans (Drs. Cress and Santiago)
Tissue Procurement Core

- MCC: Drs. D. Coppola, T. Muñoz-Antonio
- PSM: Drs. I. Flores
- **Goal:** Facilitate the collection, processing and storage of well-annotated Puerto Rican biospecimens for use in research.

- Availability of biospecimens from Puerto Ricans will support research in cancer health disparities and facilitate answering questions on gene-environment interactions involving Hispanics.

MCC

- HCP may lack cultural competency
- Language is patient barrier
- HCP may lack familiarity working with interpreter
- MCC is not first choice for cancer care

PSM

- Limited resources for cancer supportive care
- Patients may not know where or how to access services
- Patients have limited choice
- Cancer is less openly discussed - stigma
Addressing Health Disparities

- All research and outreach activities under the PSM-MCC Outreach Core focus on reducing cancer-related health disparities through cancer education about:
  - Prevention and early detection
  - Promotion of participation in clinical trials
  - Biobanking awareness

Goal and Specific Aims

**Goal:** To examine the most effective communication channel for delivering cancer prevention and biobanking education.

**Specific Aim 1:** To complete the development of the intervention protocols, media and assessment instruments, including translation and pilot testing. *(Completed)*

**Specific Aim 2:** To assess the feasibility and acceptability of each of three conditions from the perspective of the community and key stakeholders. *(In progress)*

**Specific Aim 3 (secondary):** To estimate the differential effects of the three intervention modalities. *(In progress)*
Previous outreach and research activities in U56 demonstrated a need for empirical evidence on specific cancer communication modalities.

Goals for U54 Outreach pilot research project:
- Applied to delivery health communication interventions or recruitment efforts in Hispanic populations.
- Synergize with other current and planned partnership efforts.

Strategy:
- Examined current research priorities within U54.
- Need for biospecimens across various projects.
- Biobanking was selected as a content area.

New adapted DVD

Original DVD
Original DVD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAP Critiques</th>
<th>MCC and PSM Adaptations (MERC)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The video lacked emotional connection.</td>
<td>• Added footage from Puerto Rico</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cancer survivor testimonial</td>
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<td>• Family scenes</td>
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<tr>
<td>The purpose was not clear</td>
<td>• Added a direct call to action</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Incorporated a return mail card</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Toll-free # and email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical language</td>
<td>• Re-narrated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Removed science heavy language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length (~9)</td>
<td>• Shortened video without compromising content (~6)</td>
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Experimental Conditions

1. **Standard Dissemination**- Mail biobanking DVD & print materials on general cancer prevention.


3. **Charla**- Discussion of cancer prevention & biobanking. Participants will get print materials on general cancer prevention and view biobanking DVD.
Study Materials
Cancer Prevention Brochure: “Take Control of Your Health”

Methods: Inclusion Criteria

- Self-report as Hispanic and have a preference for Spanish language materials
- Age ≥ 30
- Ability to speak and read standard Spanish
- No personal history of cancer other than non-melanoma skin cancer
- Willingness and ability to participate in the study (e.g., transportation to attend Charlas if randomized to that condition)
Study Materials
Biobanking Attitudes and Knowledge Survey (BANKS)

Community Based Recruitment
Interested individuals will call a study “hot line”

Callers who meet criteria will: be enrolled, complete baseline survey and be randomized
(n=264)
(Ponce n=132; TPA n=132)

Standard Dissemination
(n=88)  
(Ponce n=44; TPA n=44)

Enhanced Dissemination
(n=88)  
(Ponce n=44; TPA n=44)

Charla
(n=88)  
(Ponce n=44; TPA n=44)

Materials mailed

Prompt phone call: 7 days after materials are mailed

Attend charla & receive materials

Final call: 7 days after intervention. Follow up survey & opportunity to sign up in a biobanking registry.

Materials mailed

Final call: 7 days after intervention. Follow up survey & opportunity to sign up in a biobanking registry.

Materials mailed

Final call: 14 days after intervention. Follow up survey & opportunity to sign up in a biobanking registry.
Recruitment
(updated 07/28/14)

Tampa
Screened N=34

Eligible n=30
Not eligible/declined n=4
Reasons: -Under age 30
-Time constraints
-Unable to contact

Randomized and Pre-tested

Arm 1 n=9
Arm 2 n=11
Arm 3 n=10

Post-test n=7
Drop out n=0

Post-test n=7
Drop out n=1

Post-test n=6
Drop out n=0

Biobanking Registry N=20

Ponce
Screened N=86

Eligible n=77
Not eligible/declined n=9
Reasons: -Under age 30
-Declined to complete questionnaire
-No transportation to attend charla

Randomized and Pre-tested

Arm 1 n=27
Arm 2 n=25
Arm 3 n=25

Post-test n=20
Drop out n=3

Post-test n=21
Drop out n=0

Post-test n=10
Drop out n=2

Biobanking Registry N=44

Recruitment Challenges

MCC
- Recruiting
- Consent
- Compensation

PSM
- Recruiting
- Consent
- Compensation

Moffitt Cancer Center
Partnership
MCC: Gwendolyn Quinn PhD, Thomas Brandon, PhD, Vani Simmons, PhD, Susan Vadaparampil, PhD, Clement Gwede, PhD, Jessica McIntyre, Wendy Rojas and Yonira Rivera.

PSM: Julio Jiménez, MD, Cruz María Nazario, PhD, Eida Castro, PsyD, Gloria Asencio, PhD, Himilce Vélez and Johanna Corchado.