

# Empowering *Promotores de Salud* as Partners in Cancer Education and Research in Rural Southwest Kansas

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Less than 10% of all adult patients with cancer participate in cancer clinical trials (Baquet, Ellison, & Mishra, 2009; Comis, Miller, Aldigé, Krebs, & Stoval, 2003; Saterén et al., 2002). Participation in clinical cancer research studies is even lower for patients from vulnerable minority populations (Murthy, Krumholz, & Gross, 2004), and little is known about the participation rates of rural Latinos. Multi-level barriers hinder participation in clinical research among minority patients (Anwuri et al., 2013; Hubbard, Kidd, Donaghy, McDonald, & Kearney, 2007; Schmotzer, 2012). Among Latinos and other immigrant groups, limited English proficiency serves as a barrier to participation in clinical research, with about half of U.S. Latino families reporting Spanish as their primary language (Schnoll et al., 2005). Temporary pending migrant or undocumented status further impedes access to clinical research and services among immigrant Latinos in the United States (Loue, Faust, & Bunce, 2000). Fortunately, evidence suggests that when they are provided with opportunities to participate, minority patients participate in clinical research studies, including those focused on cancer, at the same rate as non-Latino Caucasians (Wendler et al., 2005).

Building community infrastructure to enhance participation in cancer research is critical, particularly in vulnerable ethnic minority and rural communities that typically face the additional burden of geographic isolation (Chiu, Mitchell, & Fitch, 2013; Schensul & Trickett, 2009). Interventions that use multi-level networking and capacity-building strategies have effectively engaged Latino communities in cancer research. Including multi-ethnic populations in all stages of the cancer research continuum is more likely to generate research programs that are more responsive to the groups largely affected by cancer disparities (Baquet, Commiskey, Daniel Mullins, & Mishra, 2006). In fact, a systematic

**Purpose/Objectives:** To describe community-based participatory processes used to develop *promotore* training on cancer research, and to assess the feasibility of training *promotores* from rural communities to disseminate cancer research information.

**Design:** Prospective, cohort design.

**Setting:** Rural communities in the state of Kansas.

**Sample:** 34 Spanish-speaking *promotores* attended an information session; 27 enrolled and 22 completed training.

**Methods:** With input from a community advisory board, the authors developed a leadership and cancer curriculum and trained Spanish-speaking *promotores* to disseminate information on cancer research. *Promotores* completed pretraining and post-training surveys in Spanish to assess demographic characteristics and changes in knowledge of cancer, cancer treatment and cancer research studies, and intent to participate in cancer research.

**Main Research Variables:** Cancer knowledge, awareness of cancer clinical trials, interest in participating in cancer clinical research studies.

**Findings:** Compared to pretraining, after training, *promotores* were more likely to correctly define cancer, identify biopsies, describe cancer stages, and report ever having heard of cancer research studies.

**Conclusions:** Completion rates of the training and willingness to participate in cancer research were high, supporting the feasibility of training *promotores* to deliver community-based education to promote cancer research participation.

**Implications for Nursing:** Nursing professionals and researchers can collaborate with *promotores* to disseminate cancer education and research among underserved rural Latino communities in Kansas and elsewhere. Members of these communities appear willing and interested in improving their knowledge of cancer and cancer clinical trials.

**Key Words:** *promotores de salud*; cancer research; Latinos; immigrants; lay health workers; community-based participatory research

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