

Cancer Care for Diverse Populations: Relevant Communications and Research

Do patients understand the plethora of educational materials that you give them? How do the sociocultural characteristics of health consumers affect their decision to accept or reject screening messages? What community-based models can be implemented to better reach women with breast and cervical cancer information? What factors affect cancer clinical trial enrollment among racial/ethnic groups? How has the Internet impacted information-seeking behaviors? How can participatory research methods boost the effectiveness of cancer communications and research? How can the fields of adult education and cancer control partner to engage individuals with limited literacy skills with cancer prevention information?

In thinking about these questions, consider that the past decade has seen unprecedented advances in translating research findings into public health and cancer control practices to reduce cancer risks. Yet, such successes have not been fully realized by all members of society, particularly those representing various age, race/ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.¹ Several Institute of Medicine reports emphasize the importance of taking into account diversity in the conceptualization and design of cancer education and research,^{2,3} while the Office of Minority Health describes a need for the effective and respectful delivery of healthcare interventions and communications as outlined in published national standards on culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS).⁴ As pointed out in *Healthy People 2010*, successful cancer control communications and research interventions must be designed with an intrinsic understanding and appreciation of the importance of cultural, linguistic, and literacy needs of diverse audiences.⁵

The papers in this supplement are a direct outcome of an NCI-funded project titled *Cancer, Culture and Literacy Institute*. This project aims to examine the nexus of culture and literacy relating to effective cancer communications and research, and to foster the professional development of cancer control investigators wishing to enrich their perspectives on culture and literacy in the conceptualization and design of cancer control research. The

Cancer, Culture and Literacy Institute includes an intensive 5-day hands-on learning experience in Tampa, Florida, as well as monthly continuing education modules delivered via the Web and mentoring experiences with nationally recognized scholars involved in this interdisciplinary field of scientific inquiry. See <http://www.moffitt.usf.edu/promotions/cclinstitute> for more information.

This supplement represents one of the first attempts to bring together a group of papers that address and untangle the important tenets of culture and literacy relating to cancer education, outreach, and research activities. The papers offer opportunities and challenges across a broad spectrum of topics, including evidence-based models for breast and cervical health, spirituality and psychosocial adaptation, provider training, clinical trials education, smoking cessation, development and evaluation of culturally tailored education materials, adult literacy education, Internet use, and attitudes toward cancer. The authors represent a wide range of disciplines, including social work, medicine, public health, nursing, psychology, and health education. They offer a number of strategies and lessons learned for reaching priority populations in consideration of cultural and racial/ethnic variation and multiple literacy levels.

We anticipate that the ideas presented here will serve as a springboard for future culturally and linguistically relevant research endeavors that have the potential to reduce healthcare disparities. It is our sincere hope that this information will lead to other promising, innovative educational modalities, will contribute to cancer communications and research interventions that are multicultural, multilingual, and literacy-sensitive, and will be both meaningful and beneficial to our demographically changing population.

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