



Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN) University of Colorado HAN Member Center (CU-HAN)

Project Information Sheet - January 2008

Project overview

The Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN) brings together researchers and partner communities from nine of the Prevention Research Centers (PRC). Created in 2001, HAN conducts research and disseminates results of that research to understand determinants of healthy aging, identify interventions that promote healthy aging, and translate the research into sustainable community-based programs. After defining a healthy aging prevention research agenda, HAN conducted the following activities: state-of-the-knowledge reviews of existing research; a survey of physical activity capacity in local partner communities, with related printed guides, now being updated as a web-based Active Options program (Physical Activity Interest Group (IG)); a pilot test of a community environmental audit tool to identify barriers to physical activity (Environmental Aspects IG); an ongoing Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded study of the built/physical environment and walking behaviors (Environmental Aspects IG); structured reviews and evaluation of community-based depression and emotional health interventions (Healthy Brain IG); focus groups in local partner communities to learn what individuals know and believe about brain health as part of the development of a National Action Plan to promote brain health through health promotion interventions (Healthy Brain IG); And an Evaluation Workgroup. The Research Dissemination and Practice Group supports all of the IGs in collaboration with state- and national-level public health and aging services networks; three national conferences (focused on physical activity, depression, and likely social/environmental determinants of healthy aging) fall under the RDPG umbrella.

Why? A description of the health problem

- There are more older people alive today than at any other time in human history.
- Older adults (age 65+) represented about 12% of the U.S. population in 2000 (12.8% of the SLV population); the proportion is expected to increase to nearly 20% by 2030.
- The prevalence of chronic disease and disability increases with age, with related economic and social costs.

Potential areas of HAN research concerning older adults and healthy aging

- Interactive effects of socio-ecological factors that influence healthy aging, including ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic characteristics of individuals, communities, and physical, social and political environments
- Barriers and facilitators for diverse groups of older adults to engage in healthy behaviors
- Methods and models to foster participatory community leadership in health promotion research and programs
- Methods for successful translation of evidence-based interventions into communities

Community participation

SLV community team members provide knowledge of the needs of older adults and existing resources in their various Valley communities. Several members have completed human subjects' protection training and now actively participate in research. They develop dissemination materials and methods, identify research areas, participate in grant proposals, identify appropriate sites and sampling frames for surveys and pilot tests; and present results locally and beyond.

Benefits of the project

- Older adults will benefit from information and evidence-based interventions that promote healthy aging.
- Senior service providers will gain access to information and programs that benefit their clients.
- The community will gain access to information and programs that benefit all older adults.
- SLV community team members and their university colleagues will gain experience and knowledge in participatory research and the development and evaluation of interventions.

CU-HAN SLV Community Team

Lucinda Bryant (CU-HAN investigator), Sandra Blevins (assisted living), Sue Davis (Citizens Corp), Dan Gutierrez (senior center), Robin Liston (RMPRC), Joyce Lopez (case management), Liza Marron (LiveWell project), Patt Morgan-Lloyd (RSVP), Aida Sahud (Adams State), Marian Seegrist (community member), Frances Valdez (South Central Seniors AAA), Jeanne Wonser (retired RN and community member)

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For more information about this project, please contact Lucinda (Cindy) Bryant at lucinda.bryant@uchsc.edu.