First NOCEMHD conference of the 2011-2012 academic given by our new faculty member, Dr. Dana March

Putting Health Disparities in Place: Risk, Resilience, and Research Directions (Tuesday, October 11, 2011)

According to a variety of indicators, health across the life span is poorer in the United States than in comparable high-income countries, such as the United Kingdom. Within the United States—the population of which is rapidly diversifying—there are marked racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in physical and mental health status and care. These disparities can be linked to specific features of place (e.g., country, state, city, neighborhood), which are shaped by multiple social, economic, and political processes at a given historical moment. Using the example of Black-White differences in severe mental illness (i.e., schizophrenia) in the United States, this talk addresses the need to consider the dynamic and complex nature of place, accounting for sources of both risk and protection, when trying to understand racial/ethnic disparities in health over the life span and across historical time. Evidence from a series of studies in the East Bay Area of California, using data from a cohort born 1959-1967, this talk presented evidence that neighborhoods at birth in this context confer both risk for and protection from schizophrenia later in adulthood. This evidence underscores the need for rich contextualization of epidemiologic work by demonstrating how the lens of history can enrich greatly scientific questions, hypotheses, and the interpretation of findings, which may be particularly useful for disparities-related research. This line of research will be pursued by our recently funded NOCEMHD Contextual Health Disparities Core led by Drs. March and Bruce link

Pertinent References
ABOUT OUR ONGOING PROJECTS

PROJECTS SEEKING PARTICIPANTS

**Northern Manhattan Study of Metabolism and Mental Health** (NOMEM; PI: J. Luchsinger, J. Manly). NOMEM is a cohort study of 1200 Hispanics aged 55 to 64 years at baseline intended to study the interplay of metabolic conditions (pre-diabetes, diabeties) with mental health (cognition, depression). The study has been approved by the IRB and recruitment and study procedures will begin 12/01/11. For referrals, please contact Jonathan Matias (jm3162@columbia.edu) or Rafi Cabral (rc2415@columbia.edu).

**Northern Manhattan Caregiver Intervention Project** (NOCIP; PI: J. Luchsinger; NCT01306695) is a 6 month randomized trial comparing the New York University Caregiver Counseling Intervention to a community health worker intervention in 160 Hispanic caregivers of persons with dementia. Recruitment in NOCIP will be open until at least February of 2012. For referrals, please contact Gabriela Torres (gt2254@columbia.edu).

**Diabetes Control and Memory Impairment in Minority Elderly** (DIAMEM; Leader: J. Luchsinger, MD) is a cohort study of 609 persons with diabetes with the objective of studying predictors of memory impairment among persons with type 2 diabetes. DIAMEM is closed to recruitment.

**Counseling Adults to Control Hypertension** (COACH; leader: O. Ogedegbe, MD; NCT01180673) is a randomized trial of a 12 month community-based intervention to improve blood pressure control among African American and Hispanic elderly. COACH completed recruitment in June of 2011 and is expected to finish in June of 2012.

**Members News!**

Miriam Mejia, BA, the Deputy Director of Alianza Dominicana, and leader of the NOCEMHD community health worker program in NOCHOP and NOCIP, retired this fall. Ms. Mejia has been a part of the center since its foundation in 2003 as the Center for the Health of Urban Minorities (CHUM) and is co-responsible for its development and accomplishments. Letty Mejia and Milagros Batista will be taking her place at Alianza Dominicana.

Walter Palmas, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine and leader of NOCHOP, was appointed Fellow of the American Heart Association in the High Blood Pressure Research Council.

**NOCIP participated in the Alzheimer’s Walk 2011.** NOCIP research team members participated in the Alzheimer’s walk which took place on Sunday, October 23, 2011 at Riverside Park, in support of Alzheimer’s Disease research and in support of caregivers of persons with dementia.

José Luchsinger, MD was voted vice-president of the board of ARC, a senior center in the community of Northern Manhattan.

**Collaboration, Training, and Career Opportunities**

Career development and ancillary studies: We are interested in supporting ancillary studies in our ongoing and future projects, including proposals for loan repayment programs, K awards, small grants (R03, R21) and R01 projects. Please contact us for more information.

**Contact Information**

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We are seeking a part-time or full time biostatistician or epidemiologist with advanced biostatistical skills for data analyses and preparations of reports for center studies to begin immediately. Students enrolled in Master and Doctoral degree programs are welcomed to apply. Proficiency in SAS required. Please contact Cynthia Morel at cm2632@columbia.edu.

We are seeking early and/or midcareer investigators with an interest and track record in minority health and health disparities to fill Assistant Professor and Associate Professor positions in the Center on Aging and Health Disparities in the Division of General Medicine, where NOCEMHD is housed. MD, PhD, and other degrees welcome. If interested or referring someone, please send the candidate’s CV to José Luchsinger at jal94@columbia.edu.