Indigenous Aging Research: Current State of the Science and Future Directions for Research

Friday, October 30, 2015
Webinar Speakers

Sarah Llanque, PhD, RN
Frisch Institute for Senior Care’s Scholar-in-Residence
Florida State College at Jacksonville

Jordan Lewis, MSW, PhD
Assistant Professor
University of Washington School of Social Work
Indigenous Wellness Research Institute
Quick Audience Poll

• Please tell us who you are.
Indigenous Aging Research: Current State of the Science and Future Directions for Research

Sarah Llanque, PhD, RN
Scholar-in-Residence
Florida State College at Jacksonville
Frisch Institute for Senior Care
GSA Indigenous Peoples & Aging Interest Group
Webinar: October 30, 2015
12 – 1 pm Eastern Time
Presentation Outline

- Demographics/Epidemiology
- Past research
- Current research
- Native Elder Research Centers
- Methodologies
- Recommendations for future research
- Conclusion
Personal Background
Demographics/Epidemiology

- 231,482 Native Elders enrolled in a federally recognized tribe
- Native Elder population is expected to triple
- Native Elder Centenarians
- 50% of Native Elders live in 6 states: OK, AZ, CA, NM, NC, TX
- Two frequent chronic conditions affecting Native Elders were arthritis and heart disease.

(Administration for Community Living, 2015)
Indian Relocation Act

- Law intended to encourage Native Americans to leave reservations, acquire vocational skills, and assimilate into the general population.
- Seventy-eight percent of Natives live off tribal reservations but many live in counties close to reservations, particularly throughout the West, including Oklahoma.
Indigenous Aging Researchers

• R. Turner Goins
• Margaret Moss
• Jordan Lewis
• Spero Manson and Dedra Buchwald
• Lori Jervis
• J. Neil Henderson
• Mere Kēpa & Lorna Dyall
• Paula Carter, PhD
Zuni Elders and Theory of Tolerated Illness

- Margaret Moss, PhD, used an ethnographic qualitative approach to examining chronic disease and health among Zuni Elders.
- From her work with Native Elders, she contextualized the phenomenon “Tolerated Illness™” which is a discordance between subjective and objective health measures in the chronically ill patient.
- NIA R03 Funding, University of Texas Health Science Center
Native Elders, Dementia, and Caregiving

- Lori Jervis, PhD explored dementia and family caregiving in Native Elders.
- This mixed methods study used interviews with 150 Native Elders of a senior nutrition program on a Northern Plains reservation.
- This study was funded by NIA K01.

(Jervis, Boland, & Fickenscher, 2010; Jervis & Manson, 2002)
Alzheimer’s and Native Elders in Oklahoma

- J. Neil Henderson (Oklahoma Choctaw)
- Funded by the Alzheimer’s Association
- Examine the cultural construction of Alzheimer’s disease amongst Choctaw Elders and their family caregivers.

(Henderson & Henderson, 2002)
The Native Elder Care Study

- R. Turner Goins, PhD, at West Virginia University used a cross-sectional design to study disability in Native Elders 65+. Study showed that Native Elders experience higher rates of chronic disease compared to national statistics of older adults. Two-thirds of the sample experienced some degree of comorbidity according to the scale used. Older age, poorer physical functioning, depression, and lower personal mastery were all correlates of higher comorbidity scores. Funded by NIA K01.

(Goins & Pilkerton, 2010)
The University of Colorado-Denver (UCD) and the University of Washington (UW) Native Elder Research Center (NERC) was established in 1997 to address health disparities experienced by Native elders and to increase the participation of Native people in related research.

Spero Manson (Pembina Chippewa) and Dedra Buchwald (Native Ally) established this Center.
UND Aging Center

- Paula Carter, PhD, enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and Director, National Resource Center on Native American Aging
- Research Assistant Professor at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences' Center for Rural Health

http://www.ndmedicine.org/article.cfm?articleid=325
This cohort longitudinal study was set up under the joint leadership of Māori and non-Māori investigators to describe the health, social, cultural and environmental status of Māori and non-Māori in advanced age; to identify health, social, cultural and environmental predictors of successful advanced ageing.

An approach to research informed by Kaupapa Māori (protectors of principles of conduct in Māori research).

Duration: Currently study in the sixth year of operation.
Alaska Native Elder Health

- Jordan Lewis (Aleut, Native Village of Naknek)
- Healthy aging encompasses family and community engagement, spirituality, and sense of optimism/humor.
- Rural vs. urban definitions of aging differ by levels of optimism and hope for future.
- Future work focuses on incorporating cultural values and contexts into aging process, family dynamics, and elder-centric interventions.
- Current research focuses on peer-based alcohol interventions, cultural understandings of Alzheimer’s Disease/Dementia, and urban based AK Native aging.

Examined the role that Indigenous Elders can play in ensuring that community-based research (CBR) is conducted ethically.
Chronic Disease in Urban Indigenous Elders

- Exploratory CBPR Descriptive Qualitative Study
- $n = 12$
- Content Analysis
- T32 NINR/NIH Postdoctoral Fellowship
CBPR

• CBPR has been emphasized throughout our webinar series on Indigenous Peoples and Aging.

• CBPR’s roots are in social and political movements in the 1940s and 1960s - 1970s.

• CBPR is a collaborative approach to research that involves all partners fairly in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings.
Context of Colonization

• Research should take into account the concept of colonization and history of Native people, including Elders.
• Transform the research process and health interventions to include indigenous knowledge.
• This could have a large impact on the health of Native people.
Meaningful Research

• Meaningful research should include Native/Indigenous knowledges of wellness that emphasize harmony between the spirit, body, mind, and context or environment; rather than competition.

• In these knowledges the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and aging is harmonious.
Recommendations for Future Research

• Incorporating concepts of the medicine wheel
• Indigenous theories and conceptual frameworks
  – Relational World Views (Cross, 1997)
  – Theory of Tolerated Illness (Moss, 2005)
Conclusion

• Thank you for your time.
• Wrapping up.
Resources

- http://iasquared.org
- http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/centers/CAIANH/NERC/Pages/nerc.aspx
- https://www.nrcnaa.org
References


References


GSA

• The nation’s oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging
  – 5,500+ interdisciplinary members around the world touching all facets of aging

• Mission
  – Promote multi- and interdisciplinary research in aging
  – Translate and disseminate research findings
  – Promote/advocate for education/awareness on aging across disciplines
  – Foster application of research into policy development

• To view other GSA webinars, visit geron.org/webinar

Questions?

Supported by The Mentoring Effect, A special project of the GSA Innovation Fund
In an effort for continual improvement, we would like to hear your thoughts. Please provide feedback by clicking the survey link at the end of the webinar.

Thank you again; we hope you enjoyed the program!