

F25.03: Developing a Culturally Responsive Psychosocial Support Intervention for American Indian Adults with Co-morbid Type 2 Diabetes and Cancer

Overview

American Indian (AI) adults are nearly 3 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes, and 2.3 times more likely to die from diabetes compared to non-Hispanic White adults.¹ Individuals with type 2 diabetes (T2D) are at greater risk of developing cancer and dying from it, with comorbidity becoming increasingly prevalent.¹⁻⁵ Common diabetogenic factors (e.g., obesity, low physical activity, poor diet, and stress) elevate risk for both T2D and cancer,¹⁻³ with increased mortality risk due, in part, to the strong associations between obesity and etiology of both diseases.⁶⁻⁸ There is strong evidence that increased social support is associated with decreased depressive symptoms and improved resilience for AI adults throughout their cancer experiences.¹⁶ However, diabetes self-management education plus social support (DSME+SS) interventions for comorbid T2D and cancer management remain largely under investigated, particularly within AI communities.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ The DSME+SS intervention, linking behavioral modifications for both T2D and cancer management, will be culturally adapted and prepared for efficacy testing.

We will develop a multisystem social support intervention for AI adults with comorbid T2D and cancer. To our knowledge, there has never been a T2D and cancer evidence-based intervention adapted for cultural fit with an AI community. We are partnering with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Health Services Division (PYTHSD) to develop and test the proposed intervention. The PYTHSD Diabetes Treatment and Prevention Program currently uses a non-adapted DSME curriculum with poor results. The overarching hypothesis is that a tribally tailored DSME+SS intervention will reduce risks for complications in AI adults with T2D and cancer.

What the student will DO and LEARN

The student will be boots on the ground in this community-engaged research project. They would learn about culturally responsive research with American Indian communities, and how to engage in community based participatory research models. The student will learn how to create and engage a Community Advisory Committee, and assist in the coordination of the project's. Students will learn how to use the Office of Native American Initiatives office for consultation, as well as completing IRB paperwork and how to work with the IRB at NAU. They will assist in the recruitment of and coordination of study participants in close coordination with the community health worker who will be funded through the grant. They will further learn how to create and conduct consents for the Talking Circles (culturally adapted Focus Groups). This is a 3-year study with the aim to continue into a randomized control trial long-term so significant opportunity for ongoing engagement with students. Seeking Native American students interested in this research, or students interested in learning how to conduct research with Tribal communities while demonstrating cultural humility and responsiveness.

Additional benefits

Benefits to participating in this research are of course gaining more research experience in a rich, supportive environment. Further, in addition to the aforementioned opportunities, the student will learn how to engage with stakeholders and learn about various resources available to them at NAU, as

well as how to connect with researchers at external institutions (i.e. University of Arizona). They will learn the 9 tenets of community based participatory research when working with Native American populations. Further, students will gain confidence in how to conduct research and the different nuances that arise when working with a funding source. The Co-Principal Investigators on this study are a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) also working on their PhD in Interdisciplinary Health with a health equity and psychosocial focus, as well as a Nurse, working on her PhD in Nursing. One key aspect will be getting to learn more about the resources available through the Partnership of Native American Cancer Prevention. The selected undergrad researcher will collaborate in writing scientific publications for peer-reviewed journals. In doing so, the selected undergrad researcher will learn how to ethically manage information, data, and references and communicate effectively with a defined scientific audience.

Additional qualifications

Must have an interest in working in community-engaged (not laboratory) research and working with Native American populations. Must be a self-starter and able to work independently while knowing when to seek guidance. Must have strong oral and non-verbal communication skills and able to successfully balance multiple competing deadlines and projects.

Time commitment

5 hrs/week for 30 weeks