



Seventh International Conference on Aging in the Americas

Annual Report

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2014 International Conference on Aging in the Americas

The Seventh International Conference on Aging in the Americas (ICAA) was held on September 23-25, 2014 at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The meeting entitled: "Health, Social, and Economic Dynamics of Hispanic and Latin American Aging" brought together nearly 100 Scholars to network, mentor students, and exchange ideas to investigate these issues. This year's theme focused on aging in the Americas in the context of demographic change and the social, health and economic dynamics of Hispanic aging and migration. There was a special emphasis on patterns and processes of Mexican migration.

Specifically, the collection of papers examined the ways in which these two issues -- immigration and the age profile of the population-- are related and explore the potential consequences of the changing makeup of the population for late-life health and well being in the U.S. and by example certain Latin America nations. The paper presentations paid close attention to various aspects of the immigrant experience: worksite raids, establishment of detention centers, parents not knowing the status of their children, violence against immigrants, adapting one's understanding of health to that of a new country, immigrants as a cheap source of caregiving, etc. All of these factors have a profound important impact on stress and healthful aging. Health problems may be declining in Mexico because of emigration, and rates of return to Mexico should also be taken into account.

The 2014 ICAA papers provided fresh data and unique perspectives on these topics. Specifically, how aging relates to immigrant adaptation and Latino integration/assimilation and settlement processes were highlighted across the papers. In addition, the papers on immigrant health considered important influences of immigrant selection, acculturation, and stress among the elderly and their families in Mexico and other Latin American nations.

Dr. Rebeca Wong, P. & S. Kempner Distinguished Professor in Health Disparities at UTMB Galveston, Fernando Riosmena, Associate Professor of Demography and Geography, UC Boulder, and Jacqueline Angel Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at UT Austin will serve as Co-editors of the special issue. We should note that a subset of papers presented at the 2014 ICAA are currently under external review process. Copies of the journal will be distributed to conference participants at the 2015 Bridging Conference in Mexico City.

I. For a Brief Summary of Presentations and Key Findings from the Consensus Building Session go to www.lbjschool.utexas.edu

Participants convened over lunch at the end of the conference to identify major priorities that have the potential to inform future research and extramural funding decisions related to aging in the Americas. Dr. Jacqueline Angel facilitated a 60-minute round-robin discussion with 35 invited speakers and emerging scholars. Two rapporteurs took notes of ideas discussed and the lead rapporteur organized the discussion outcomes around five key themes with the input of Dr. Fernando Riosmena.

II. Emerging Scholars Mentoring Program

The aim of the CAA Mentoring Program is to facilitate one-on-one interaction and networking between emerging scholars and faculty mentors. The ultimate goal of the program is to provide the skills, knowledge and experience to prepare emerging scholars to succeed in their career paths in the behavioral and social sciences. To this end, the 2014 ICAA fostered the development of emerging scholars by sponsoring a peer-reviewed poster session on Wednesday, September 24 in addition to the invited speakers and keynote lectures. The Emerging Scholar Mentoring Program encouraged proposals from all interested graduate students and post-doctoral trainees and is dedicated to maximizing diversity within the Scholar network.

Poster Session

The poster session organizer (Terrence Hill, The University of Arizona) reviewed all submissions to confirm topical relevance. Poster abstracts were submitted from around the U.S. and Mexico. Several disciplines were represented, including Gerontology, Sociology, Demography, Economics, Public Policy, Psychology, Social Work, Medicine, Public Health, Nursing, and Kinesiology & Nutrition. This year, 29 of 30 submissions were accepted for presentation in the poster session. One was rejected because it was not relevant to Hispanic aging and health. Twenty posters were presented.

Four outstanding poster submissions were selected by Drs. Mary Haan (UCSF) and Eileen Crimmins (USC) for oral presentation during the regular conference proceedings.

Key Results of New Directions in Hispanic Health and Aging Research

Given expansion of health care in Mexico and the U.S., examine how low-income populations receive health information, interact with health care systems.

- Better transdisciplinary understanding of old-age mortality in Latin America
- Connections between diet and Hispanic aging.
- Role of psychological and psychosocial traits associated on healthy aging.
- Better understanding of the family, socioeconomic, and health care use trajectories of the elderly during adulthood (i.e., before baseline in longitudinal studies of aging)
- Continued examination of the mechanisms of the Hispanic mortality advantage and identification of signs of its deterioration, with special attention to inflammation

1. Phillip Cantu, University of Texas-Austin, "Concordance of Disability Measurements across Races."
2. Choi, Daesung, University of Texas-San Antonio, "How Do Legal Status Moderate the Relationships Among Acculturation, Neighborhood Characteristics, and Health of Hispanic Adults?"
3. Elisha Cohen, Princeton, "Health Differentials of Older Hispanic Immigrants by Age at Arrival."
4. Lawrence Panas, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, "An Assessment of the Temporal Relationship between Depression and Disability Onset in an Older Hispanic Origin Population."

The judging criteria included quality of background (theory and aims), methods (appropriate data source and methodology), results (clearly displayed/ interpreted), conclusions (summary and implications), and presentation (poster design and readability).

The top three posters were selected by a juried panel to receive prizes. The judges included Cesar Gonzalez (Instituto Nacional De Geriatria), Ryan Masters (University of Colorado-Boulder), Norma Padron (New York Academy of Medicine), and Timothy Reistetter (The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston). Prizes included Amazon gift cards, including \$50 for 3rd place, \$100.00 for 2nd place, and \$150.00 for 1st place.

First Prize: Carlos Diaz, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, "Family Size and Old Age Well-Being: Effects of the Fertility Transition in Mexico."

Second Prize: Jacqueline Torres, University of California, Los Angeles, "Gender, migration and late-life health: Conditional effects of spousal U.S. migration on the health of older Mexican women."

Third Prize: Joseph Saenz, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, "Facets of Socioeconomic Position and Disability Onset and Progression: The Cas

Mentoring Event

The mentoring program featured an awards ceremony, a dinner, and a "speed mentoring" session to facilitate feedback on the work presented at the poster session. William Vega and Stipica Mudrazija organized the event. The "speed mentoring" session included 15 faculty mentors: Jacqueline Angel (The University of Texas at Austin), Patricia Heyn (University of Colorado Boulder), Robert Hummer (The University of Texas at Austin), Mariana Lopez-Ortega (Instituto Nacional de Geriatria, Mexico), Kyriakos Markides (University of Texas Medical Branch), David Marquez (University of Illinois at Chicago), Ryan Masters (University of Colorado Boulder), Susan Parker (CIDE, Mexico), Fernando Riosmena (University of Colorado, Boulder), Sunshine Rote (University of Louisville), Judith Treas (University of California, Irvine), William Vega (University of Southern California), Robert Wallace (University of Iowa), Steven Wallace (University of California Los Angeles), Rebeca

Wong (University of Texas Medical Branch). 23 emerging scholars including graduate students and postdoctoral fellows also participated. Each emerging scholar met with two mentors for twenty minutes each and discussed current and future research plans as well as advice on the job market and tactics to succeed in their careers in the behavioral and social sciences.

Following this session, mentees were asked to evaluate the program and 14 individuals participated. An overwhelming majority (93%) rated the experience as excellent or very good. The same proportion of mentees said they would recommend this speed mentoring activity to a friend or colleague. Open-ended qualitative remarks indicate mentors and mentees had an overall positive experience. One mentee said she/he expected to “discuss career trajectory, research ideas, and research funding with senior scholars” while another mentee expected to “get advice on post doc and career options.” A few note that the format was excellent and should be repeated in future conferences. Some suggestions for improvements for the next ICAA include a quieter location, making the sessions last longer, and inviting mentors and mentees to get in touch prior to the meeting.

III. Evaluation

Dr. Robert Wallace, MD, MS and the Irene Ensminger Stecher Professor of Epidemiology and Internal Medicine, Department of Epidemiology at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics attended the three day conference to provide an overall external assessment of the conference. A post-evaluation of the 2014 ICAA outcomes was held during the CAA Planning and Advisory Group Meeting in Washington, DC on November 8, 2014. In his evaluation, he provided both a formative evaluation (an assessment of the process and conference format) and summative evaluation (assessment of the conference impact and outcomes from the conference). In his final report he concluded that “the 2014 conference was of very high quality and met or exceeded all of its goals. It was an extremely useful activity structured to maximize learning and scientific interchange, based on the experience of the past five years. It had many useful features that are rarely seen at such events. It was particularly important as an international and inter-cultural research exchange and multi-lateral learning experience. As in the past, the trainees came first and that made the conference work”.

Dr. Wallace also noted based that his analyses of the Conference Participant Survey administered towards the end of the conference and also available on-line to all attendees demonstrated strong commitment to both installments by attendees who were interested in future conferences. perused and informally tallied the participant evaluations. There were fifty submissions to evaluate and 49 of them were extremely positive about all aspects of the program. Responses were “excellent” or “very good.” Participants particularly praised the usefulness of the general experience.

Importantly, in his review Dr. Wallace stated that “There was adequate time for students and other trainees, and that was a significant positive for the meeting. The mentoring discussion and the poster presentations were particularly useful in that regard. The availability of all presentations and related resources on the conference web site after the

meeting is very useful.” Besides the invited speaker presentations, he noted that the poster presentations were well-executed and conducive for discussion and scientific interchange. This format is particularly useful for trainees and appeared to be appreciated by them. All of the trainees evaluated were in command of their topics and welcomed helpful comments. Dr. Wallace added that the mentoring program was “an excellent idea and enabled selected scholars attending the meeting to hear advice from senior faculty attending the meeting in a “Speeding Mentoring format, all of whom having substantial mentoring experience. Each installment had a quiet dedicated to the speed mentoring event that was conducive for faculty mentors-mentees to easily interact with one another. This took place after a long, active day and still was very well received.

IV. Measures of Productivity

The CAA Publications Committee follows a policy of alternating publication venues each installment. A subset of 2013 ICAA papers were revised and peer-reviewed and will appear in the Springer Science edited collection entitled: “Challenges of Latino Aging in the Americas” January 2015. A subset of 2014 ICAA papers are currently under peer-review at Research on Aging. Dr. Rebeca Wong, P. & S. Kempner Distinguished Professor in Health Disparities at UTMB Galveston, Fernando Riosmena, Associate Professor of Demography and Geography, UC Boulder, and Jacqueline Angel Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at UT Austin will serve as Co-editors of the special issue. Copies of the journal will be distributed to conference participants at the 2015 Bridging Conference in Mexico City and at the GSA Advisory Group meeting in New Orleans.

In addition to the edited collection, the forthcoming 2014 ICAA Proceedings, including invited speaker and emerging scholar abstracts and key findings from the consensus building session will be co-published with the UCLA RCMAR. The 2014 ICAA Highlights were distributed at the CAA Planning meeting in Washington, DC and available at <http://lbjschool.austin.utexas.edu/caa/files/2014/07/2014-ICAA-highlights-sm.pdf>

V. Future Directions

The longer term plans include meetings on various topics of relevance to Hispanic aging with more of a comparative focus. The following are some general directions and new themes recommended by Dr. Robert Wallace along these lines.

- A. Work on the role of randomized control studies and experimental interventions in policy studies to improve the quality of life among older Hispanics on both sides of the border.
- B. Studies assessing the impact of immigration processes on the health and socio-behavioral outcomes of migrant populations.
- C. In-depth investigations of personal health services and their effect on public health and geriatric social services in both the U.S. and Mexico.
- D. A session devoted to research resources for questions on ethnicity and elder health. These might include access to data sets, biobanks, informatics platforms and data sharing capacities to inform trainees and others. Particularly the resources at NIA and the equivalents in Mexico and other Latin American nations would be of value.

- E. Examination of the history of Hispanic populations and culture in the US since the American revolution. This would enable the humanities to become more involved in the research process and provide additional opportunities to support bi-national studies of aging in the Americas.
- F. A theme suggested by one of the policy sessions of this meeting is addressing the tensions and difficulties of merging policy and politics with social and behavioral science, including economics. This is currently an important issue for both the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, and there could be an important benefit for trainees in hearing cogent analyses of the problem. Resources at the National Research Council may be able to provide assistance.
- G. The growing emphasis on biomarkers of health and psychosocial behavior has been supported in part by the National Institute on Aging. It may be worthwhile to introduce new investigators to the methods and directions of such research, to entice some to pursue multi-disciplinary career pathways that are likely to be productive in the future.

In the immediate future, the CAA will participate in an international bridging workshop with Instituto Nacional de Geriatria, México, D.F. hosted by Dr. Luis Gutierrez and Mariana Lopez. The conference will focus on the articulation of formal and informal systems of support in Mexico and The United States in the context of health and welfare Reform. The recently submitted second competing renewal application proposes three new installments beginning in 2017 that examine the evidence of place effects on the health and well-being of older Latinos.

Appendix A

History of the Conference Series on Aging in the Americas

The Conference Series on Aging in the Americas has several goals. One is to promote interdisciplinary collaboration by gathering a broad array of researchers in the fields of Hispanic health, health care policy, and behavioral and social aspects of aging into a single forum to exchange ideas and foster collaborative efforts aimed at addressing key issues affecting the health of aged Latinos.

The first conference, “Aging in the Americas: Critical Social Policy Issues,” took place in 2001 and explored the consequences of changing population processes, including migration, on the economic dependency of Hispanic individuals. For more information, including a conference summary report, visit: <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/caa/index.php>.

The second conference was held in 2005. A wide variety of issues and opinions were covered at the second conference, but three themes stood out: There is a Hispanic aging boom driven in part by the fact that Hispanics live longer than non-Hispanic whites; longer years of life for Hispanics do not translate into healthier years of life; and for many Hispanic populations, particularly those residents of the U.S.-Mexico border, aging must be understood in a binational context. For more information on the second conference, including a conference summary report, abstracts, videos and transcripts, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/caa/research.php>.

The third conference explored the biobehavioral underpinnings and social interaction on Hispanic health in 2009. Conference participants deduced what was lacking in the research in order to develop effective health care policy in the Mexican-origin population. The conference shed new light on the need for a collaborative effort in investigating Hispanic health and the protective role of immigration and family.

In 2010, the fourth installment examined the issues of disability, caregiving and long-term care policy. The meeting brought together nearly 200 participants, including many of the world’s leading researchers in older people of Mexican origin from academia, science and policy disciplines. For more information, visit: <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/caa/2010/index.php>

At the 2012 meeting the papers encompassed national, international and comparative studies of Hispanic aging and related methodological challenges. The meeting was held in Los Angeles, California at the University of Southern California. For more information, visit: <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/caa/2012/index.php>

At the most 2013 CAA installment, researchers came together to address key issues related to the changing demographics in Mexico and the U.S. and the complex social dimensions of Hispanic population health and aging for both nations at The University of Texas at Austin on September 17-19, 2013.

In 2014, ICAA was held at UC Boulder. Papers focused on the social and economic demography of Hispanic aging, migration, and immigrant adaptation and Latino integration.

