

SYMPOSIUM 2: WORKING SEPARATE AND TOGETHER: LESSONS LEARNED IN GLOBAL AND LOCAL ACADEMIC-COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Background: Successful research with cross-cultural populations routinely necessitates iterative rounds of collaboration between academic and local partners. Community-based research provides essential pathways for designing, implementing, and sustaining effective strategies for promoting mental health equity globally. However, the complex processes and challenges that underlie these collaborations are rarely discussed.

Aims/Objectives: This symposium synthesizes honest reflections and “lessons learned” on community-based research methods across distinct settings, populations, and research categories (ethnographic, biobehavioral, observational, and assessment), with the goal of identifying and improving current areas of weakness in community-based research practices.

Methods/Proposition: This symposium synthesizes findings from four research studies across research domains, all of which relied on community-based methods to design and fulfill their research aims. Each presentation will detail the process of development of academic-community partnerships, focusing on specific challenges and solutions. Presenters will discuss “lessons learned” and provide recommendations to others interested in fostering similar partnerships.

Results/Potential Outcomes: Jonathan Yahalom will present findings from a year-long ethnographic study on elders with dementia in Oaxaca, Mexico, which explores how community collaborations can be leveraged to negotiate diverging epistemologies surrounding the existence of mental illness. Gabriela Nagy will present on the barriers and facilitators of a community-based partnership designed to assess relationships between stress, resilience, and health outcomes among Hispanic immigrants in North Carolina, USA. Sylvanna Vargas will describe a process used to integrate community-based methods into biological research with low-income, LGBTQ ethnic minorities in Los Angeles, USA. Finally, Megan Ramaiya will share findings on utilizing partnerships between local schools and academic institutions to test and improve a school-based mental health intervention in Nepal.

Discussion/Implications: This symposium discusses future directions for strengthening academic-community research partnerships designed to reduce local and global mental health disparities. Members will also highlight a common theme of cultural humility as a prerequisite for conducting ethical community-based research.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this symposium participants will be able to:

1. Identify barriers and facilitators of academic-community partnerships across diverse research categories
2. Propose ways of synergizing efforts and interests in respective settings, in line with the idea of “working separate and together”.

References

1. Minkler, M. (2005). Community-based research partnerships: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Urban Health*, 82(2), ii3-ii12.
2. Ellis, B. H., Kia-Keating, M., Yusuf, S. A., Lincoln, A., & Nur, A. (2007). Ethical research in refugee communities and the use of community participatory methods. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 44(3), 459-481.