

2020-2021 Assistant Professor Excellence Speaker Series

Addressing tobacco-related health disparities among Latinx adults: Community engagement and intervention research

Dr. Virmarie Correa-Fernandez
Psychological Health and Learning Sciences

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Via Microsoft Teams ([click here to attend](#))

This talk will focus on the process and preliminary outcomes in the implementation of a feasibility study (N=38) testing a wellness program for English-prefering Latinx adults who smoke cigarettes and experience anxiety and /or depression symptoms. The program involves the provision of nicotine patches and a video/phone-based counseling intervention grounded in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT's objective is to assist individuals in developing psychological flexibility by identifying their core values, strengthening their ability to experience uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, and engaging in values-consistent behaviors. The intervention entails an 8-session protocol that is culturally relevant for Latinx adults. This presentation will include: the process and outputs of the intervention development, challenges and lessons learned during recruitment, community engagement efforts, and treatment delivery (including transitioning to a virtual study during the COVID-19 pandemic), and preliminary results of the study. This work is significant because it addresses tobacco-related disparities experienced by Latinx groups.

SPEAKER BIO: Dr. Virmarie Correa-Fernandez is a faculty in the Department of Psychological Health and Learning Sciences. She obtained her doctorate in clinical psychology (2003) from Carlos Albizu University (Puerto Rico), and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Health Disparities Research at MD Anderson (2013). The overall mission of her research program is to generate knowledge and practices that contribute to reducing tobacco-related and behavioral health disparities, particularly among Latinx/Hispanic populations. She obtained funding from the American Cancer Society to develop and test an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy intervention to be culturally appropriate for Latinx smokers experiencing depression and anxiety.

The Assistant Professor Excellence Lecture Series (APeX) is intended to showcase the breadth and depth of groundbreaking research, scholarship, and creative activity being undertaken by UH early career faculty across disciplines, as well as to offer opportunities for cross-disciplinary networking.



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