

UCSD to Team with SDSU on Study of Latino Health in San Diego County's South Bay Region

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Researchers from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine, will participate in a six-year study of Latino health in San Diego County as part of a \$9.7 million contract awarded to San Diego State University (SDSU) by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health. The UCSD subcontract will be led by Michael H. Criqui MD, MPH, professor of family and preventive medicine and professor of medicine at UCSD.

The project is one of four field centers funded by the NHLBI as part of a new, national Hispanic Community Health Study. The San Diego Hispanic Community Health Study, a tri-lateral collaboration between SDSU, UCSD and the San Ysidro Health Center, seeks to determine the prevalence of and risk factors for a number of health conditions in the largely Mexican-American population in the South Bay.

"Medical faculty from UCSD will work with colleagues from SDSU and the community to provide clinical and epidemiological expertise, studying the risk factors and causes for a wide range of diseases – from heart disease and stroke to asthma and other lung disorders, sleep disorders, and liver and kidney disease," said Criqui. "Our hope is that the Hispanic community will benefit from a better understanding of how particular risk factors and diseases might affect them."

According to the NHLBI, factors that influence Hispanic health – including diet, activity, health-care access, community support and working conditions – are associated with immigration from different cultural settings and are less commonly found in other populations. Subsequently, Hispanics are experiencing an increase in obesity, a higher risk of diabetes, and changes in social and behavioral factors that potentially impact many major chronic diseases.

"UCSD investigators will contribute to the understanding of how risk factors such as nutrition, activity, obesity, smoking, blood pressure and other physiological factors impact human health in Hispanics, as we study patients from this cohort over the next six years," said Criqui.

UCSD will join SDSU's team, lead by SDSU Graduate School of Public Health professors Greg Talavera and John Elder, in studying approximately 4,000 Hispanic patients, to explore the

influence of physiologic, cultural, psychological and sociological factors on the development and progression of health conditions in the South Bay community.

“This is one of the largest, longest and most comprehensive multi-site studies of Latino health,” said Talavera, adding that San Ysidro Health Center, UCSD and the SDSU Graduate School of Public Health are long-standing community partners.

Three other field sites have been designated as part of the nationwide NHBLI study: Chicago, coordinated by Northwestern University; the Bronx, New York, coordinated by Einstein College of Medicine; and Miami, coordinated by the University of Miami.

While the NHLBI will oversee the contract with SDSU, the study’s funding has been provided by various NIH institutes, including the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, the National Institutes of Dental and Craniofacial Research, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements.

Additional UCSD researchers include Drs. Matt Allison, Andrew Ries, Jose Loreda, Cheryl Rock, Steve Edelman, Leonel Villa-Caballero, and Ira Parker.

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