



What were the goals of the University of Illinois at Chicago Healthy Brain Research Network?

The University of Illinois at Chicago Healthy Brain Research Network (UIC-HBRN) focused on identifying and promoting culturally relevant and effective messaging to increase awareness about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). Additional goals included:

- 1) Establish a research agenda on cognitive health and healthy aging.
- 2) Build a strong evidence base for policy, communication, and programmatic interventions.
- 3) Build the capacity of public health professionals through training opportunities.

What Did the UIC-HBRN Accomplish?

As part of the HBRN Memory Messaging Workgroup, the UIC-HBRN collaborated on cross-site analyses and dissemination efforts tied to a multi-center, proof-of-concept study titled: "Evaluating the Acceptability of Public Health Messages to Promote Early Detection of Dementia in Diverse Audiences Across the Country." Messages tested were designed to engage adults who have concerns for their loved ones and who take them to health care provider visits. Messaging was tested with African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and LGBT communities.

Five themes affected how the messages were received by adult Latinos: stigma, gender roles, the importance of the mother figure, guilt, and family togetherness. Before taking action, participants wanted more information on the reasons to seek cognitive evaluation. Some messages produced guilt and generated discussions about gender roles in Latino culture. Participants perceived content mismatches between the images, calls to action, and taglines, and also acknowledged their wish to be involved in their loved one's caregiving. They suggested that all messages be translated into Spanish.

Findings show that public health messages targeting Latino cultural values are needed to encourage early detection of dementia, and those messages need to be culturally appropriate. Culturally relevant messages can increase early detection of ADRD. Findings were presented in a poster session during the Gerontological Society of America 70th Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, November 2018.

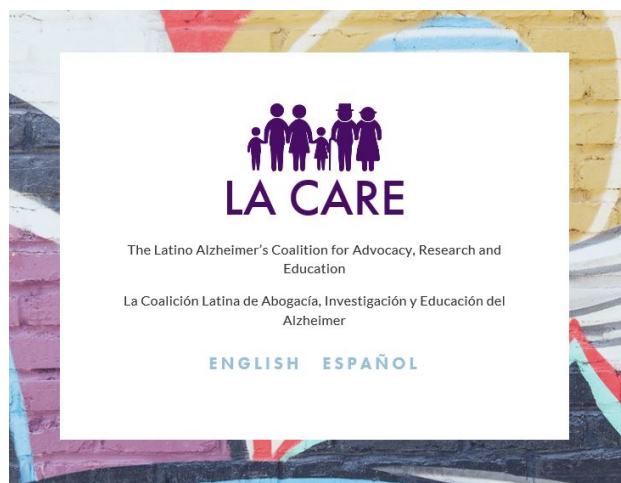


From left: Melissa Zavala, Andrew Demott, MPH, David Marquez, PhD, HBRN Scholar Guilherme Balbim, MS



UIC-HBRN also participated in the Nomenclature Review Workgroup. Building on the 2015 Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendations on communicating about cognitive health *Cognitive Aging: Progress in Understanding and Opportunities for Action*, UIC-HBRN examined terminology used for concepts related to ADRD. Scientific literature focused on ADRD was analyzed to investigate the terms and definitions used to describe cognitive aging and impairment. This work has the potential to inform national and international education and training efforts.

UIC-HBRN has produced three papers with contributions from one HBRN Scholar. UIC-HBRN also made two scientific presentations, including at the Gerontological Society of America's 70th Annual Meeting.



UIC-HBRN members are part of a coalition, the Latino Alzheimer's Coalition for Advocacy, Research and Education (LA CARE). LA CARE considers advocacy for caregiving support services, research, and education to be essential components of addressing ADRD health disparities seen in the Latino community.

The Healthy Brain Research Network was a thematic network of CDC's Prevention Research Center Program and was funded by Cooperative Agreement: U48DP005010. The findings are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

UIC-HBRN helped create a resource directory to provide a framework of services publicly available for individuals and families living with dementia with an emphasis on Latino/a communities. <https://lacare.squarespace.com/>

What is the HBRN Scholars Program?

The national Scholars Program pilots, develops, and shares models for scholarly cognitive health engagement, locally and across the national network. HBRN Scholars collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), community partners, and other HBRN universities on research projects.

The UIC-HBRN Scholars Program trained graduate students and a postdoctoral student in the public health aspects of brain health. Five scholars were trained through the program. The current HBRN Scholar, Guilherme Balbim, has been involved in the development of a Scholars Webinar series, and he took a leadership role in developing an abstract about the webinar series, which was submitted to the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society. He also participated in the data analysis and writing the manuscript, "Training the Next Generation of Aging and Cognitive Health Researchers."

What is the UIC-HBRN legacy?

The legacy of UIC-HBRN will be its work with the Latino community, the fastest-growing ethnic segment of the US population.

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