



# NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME TO THE NEW CLaRO NEWSLETTER

We are excited to present the inaugural issue of the CLaRO E-Newsletter. This quarterly newsletter will provide updates on CLaRO research and training activities, feature profiles of CLaRO faculty, staff, and students, and link you to valuable resources. We will also highlight the outstanding work being done by the CLaRO team and feature our advancements in health disparities research. This newsletter will be published 4 times per year; ongoing updates on CLaRO activities will be available on the Center's website: [claro.fiu.edu](http://claro.fiu.edu). Please share this newsletter with anyone who may have interest in CLaRO research or training activities. We welcome comments and encourage you to submit suggestions to improve future newsletters; we are continuously searching for content. Please contact Jennifer V. Chavez ([j.chavez8@umiami.edu](mailto:j.chavez8@umiami.edu)) for more information. We hope you enjoy our first issue!



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## BRIDGING THE GAP

Latinx Community & Health Equity Research Conference

March 21, 2020

Conference aims to unite researchers and the community to more address health disparities that impact South Florida Latinx Communities including substance use, violence/trauma and HIV/AIDS. A Call for Abstracts has been released, and those interested should submit abstracts to Ian Lee ([ilee@fiu.edu](mailto:ilee@fiu.edu)) by February 23rd. For more information about the conference, please contact Debbie Gibbs ([dgibbs@fiu.edu](mailto:dgibbs@fiu.edu)).

### ▶ Meet our Keynote Speaker:



**Dr. Sandro Galea**

Dean & Robert A. Knox Professor  
Boston University  
School of Public Health

Dr. Galea is a leading expert in social determinants of health, mental health, and consequences of trauma in racial/ethnic minority communities. Dr. Galea will address issues of immigration as major determinants of health affecting immigrants, particularly Latinx immigrants, in the US.

MEET MARIANO KANAMORI



Dr. Mariano Kanamori is an Assistant Professor at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Department of Public Health Sciences and a CLaRO Pilot Project Awardee. Dr. Kanamori is currently developing a study that will create and pre-test pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) materials for an HIV prevention aimed at increasing Latinx seasonal farm worker (LSFW) progress along the PrEP cascade-of-care and assess the acceptability of these PrEP materials by LSFWs who use alcohol and/or illicit drugs. Dr. Kanamori considers Miami to be his home and feels that his strong ties with the community have enabled him to implement programs using community-based participatory research approaches. Recently, Dr. Kanamori received funding for two new projects. His first project aims to design a program that uses networks of pharmacies and parks to distribute HIV information in a manner that will appeal to Latino men who have sex with men. This group of Latino men, which includes those who self-identify as bisexual and those who do not openly disclose their sexual orientation, often do not engage traditional health services or HIV community programs. For his second project, Dr. Kanamori is Co-PI on a project that is developing a real-time system to plan for the deployment of mobile PrEP clinic services that identify and reach geographic clusters of HIV incidence (PI: Dr. Susanne Doblecki-Lewis). Dr. Kanamori appreciates the dedication of CLaRO’s mentors – who enthusiastically share their expertise in prevention science and community health.

Role in CLaRO:  
 Pilot Study Principal Investigator  
 Organization/Institution:  
 University of Miami Miller School  
 of Medicine

MEET PATRIA ROJAS



Dr. Patria Rojas is principal investigator of the CLaRO research study titled “Hispanic Men Building Respect, Education, and Safety within Families” (HoMBRES de Familia or HoMBRES). Dr. Rojas’s research focuses on the health of Latinos in semi-rural and urban populations. Specifically, Dr. Rojas investigates the interconnection of substance abuse and mental health and how this relationship can impact other behavioral health issues. She believes that there is a critical need to perform research that helps improve the lives of poor and underserved Latino communities, who are disproportionately affected by these issues. Dr. Rojas is motivated by the heterogeneity of South Florida’s Latino population, as it provides a great context to examine how Latino subgroups differ in their healthcare-seeking behaviors, treatment access, and rates of retention in care/research. Her study aims to implement and evaluate the preliminary efficacy of an HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and domestic violence prevention interventions and aims to develop effective dissemination plans to engage community members in these interventions. Dr. Rojas believes that CLaRO fosters collaboration among faculty, researchers, students, scholars, and community leaders that is imperative for approaching substance abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS within the community.

Role in CLaRO:  
 Principal Investigator for HoMBRES  
 Organization/Institution:  
 Florida International University

MEET MICHAEL ROMAN



Michael Roman serves as Chair for the CLaRO Community / Scientific Advisory Board (CSAB). Mr. Roman is charged with setting goals and objectives for the board, facilitating meetings, and ensuring that board members are involved in committee activities. Mr. Roman became involved with CLaRO because he believes that CLaRO’s research is highly valuable for advancing the public good. He feels that CLaRO’s efforts to consult with researchers to develop community-engaged investigations and to disseminate the findings in a manner that maximizes community impact and helps develop community-university partnerships. In addition to his duties as Chair of the CLaRO CSAB, Michael Roman works to build and strengthen community partnerships as a dedicated employee of City of Miami. His work for the City, which includes project management and strategy development, has resulted in innovative approaches to community development projects that promote social change and healthier neighborhoods. As a native South Floridian, Mr. Roman considers HIV and sexual health to be two crucial subjects within our community. He believes that through greater civic engagement, the government and its residents can better combat health issues and other complex problems. Mr. Roman’s dedication to the South Florida community is motivated by the vibrant and diverse people that live here.

Role in CLaRO:  
 Chair of Community Scientific  
 Advisory Board  
 Organization/Institution:  
 City of Miami



DR. ROJAS & SEPA

CLaRO researcher, Dr. Patria Rojas, was recently featured locally in the Miami Herald, and nationally on NBC News, for her implementation of the CDC-endorsed intervention known as SEPA (Salud/Health, Educación/Education, Prevención/Prevention, Autocuidado/Self-care) in Latina migrant farmworker communities. SEPA, which was developed by Nena Peragallo, and tested in El Centro research studies, had been previously found to be successful with Latinas in urban areas but, prior to Dr. Rojas's study, its effects had not yet been studied in rural communities. In her interview with NBC, Dr. Rojas said her motivation for conducting the study was to bridge the gap between Latina women in rural communities and Latina women living in areas with greater access to resources. Congratulations to Dr. Rojas and her team!

To read the full length feature, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/PatriaNBC>

To read more about Dr. Rojas' research, please visit:

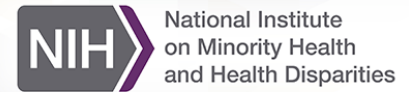
<https://crusada.fiu.edu/people/rojas-patria-phd>



Photo Courtesy of NBC News

MHRT PROGRAM

The Minority Health and Health Disparities Training (MHRT) program, which is funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), is accepting applications for its 10-week summer research training program at accredited institutions located in Argentina, Thailand, California, Florida, and Washington D.C. The MHRT Program focuses on health disparities research in the areas of HIV/AIDS risk, education, management, and prevention in disadvantaged populations. This program is open to the following students: undergraduate juniors or seniors, graduate students, pre-doctoral students enrolled in a program leading to a PhD, and post-doctoral trainees (PhD, MD, and/or DDS). Applications are due by March 1st, 2020. Accepted applicants will be paid for travel, housing, and stipend. The application can be found at <http://bit.ly/MHRTApplication>. For more information regarding the training program, visit the application website above, or contact MHRT Program Director Dr. Marcelo Tolmasky [phone: (657) 278-5263; email: [mtolmasky@fullerton.edu](mailto:mtolmasky@fullerton.edu)]. Additionally, Dayna Melton [phone: (657) 278-2780; email: [dmelton@fullerton.edu](mailto:dmelton@fullerton.edu)] can be reached for details of the MHRT Program.



DR. GATTAMORTA & THE FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT®



Dr. Karina Gattamorta, a CLaRO pilot study awardee and Research Associate Professor at the UM School of Nursing and Health Studies (SONHS), and Dr. Caitlin Ryan, Director of the Family Acceptance Project® (FAP), hosted a community engagement event on January 29th, 2020. The event was held to promote

participation in the pilot project, which aims to determine the feasibility and acceptability of the FAP among Hispanic families. During this event, Dr. Gattamorta brought together counselors from Miami-Dade County Public Schools, mental and health services and other community agencies that serve LGBTQ+ youth to discuss FAP and discuss the pressing needs of this population. FAP is the first evidence-based family support model for families that aims to prevent negative health outcomes that disproportionately affect LGBTQ+ youth. Dr. Gattamorta is actively recruiting for her pilot study, and she can be reached at [kgattamorta@miami.edu](mailto:kgattamorta@miami.edu) for more information. We congratulate Dr. Gattamorta on the success of her event and we are certain that she will continue to make a profound impact in this area of research.





For more information about Dr. Gattamorta's research:  
<https://people.miami.edu/profile/k.alvarez1@umiami.edu>

For more information about The Family Acceptance Project®:  
<https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

## Progreso en Salud: Findings from Two Adapted Social Network HIV Risk Reduction Interventions for Latina Seasonal Workers

Mariano Kanamori, Mario De La Rosa, Cho-Hee Shrader, Cesar Munayco, Susanne Doblecki-Lewis, Guillermo Prado, Steven Safren, Mary Jo Trepka & Kayo Fujimoto


Dr. Kanamori and his team recently conducted research on two social-network based adapted HIV risk reduction interventions, known as VOICES and HEALTHY, for Latina seasonal farmworkers. Dr. Kanamori and his team focused their study on 20 networks of 13 Latina farmworker friends and found that with both interventions, there were significant changes in cognitive factors such as HIV knowledge and condom use self-efficacy, behavioral factors such as female condom use and HIV testing, and communication factors such as discussing HIV prevention with friends and intent to negotiate safe sex with male partners. The 12-month study concluded that social network strategies can engage hard-to-reach populations such as Latina seasonal workers. These findings are extremely valuable as 44% of HIV cases in Miami-Dade occur in Latina seasonal farmworkers.

Article  
**Progreso en Salud: Findings from Two Adapted Social Network HIV Risk Reduction Interventions for Latina Seasonal Workers**

Mariano Kanamori <sup>1,\*,</sup> Mario De La Rosa <sup>2,</sup> Cho-Hee Shrader <sup>2,</sup> Cesar Munayco <sup>3,</sup> Susanne Doblecki-Lewis <sup>4,</sup> Guillermo Prado <sup>1,</sup> Steven Safren <sup>5,</sup> Mary Jo Trepka <sup>2</sup> and Kayo Fujimoto <sup>6,†</sup>

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**Abstract:** Background: Miami-Dade County where many Latina seasonal workers reside and work, has the highest incidence of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the US; a rate four times the national average. Despite this disproportionate risk for HIV, there are no HIV prevention interventions that aim to decrease HIV among Latina seasonal workers. Methods: The PROGRESO EN SALUD study compared the outcomes of two interventions adapted to include a social network component (VOICES and HEALTHY). Recruitment used a social network respondent-driven sampling design in which each seed was asked to recruit three friends, and those friends were asked to recruit three friends, for a total of twenty groups of 13 friends. We collected data at baseline, and 6 months and 12 months post intervention completion. We used generalized estimating equation models, properly adjusted for non-independent contributions of both social network interventions, to estimate the effects. Gaussian family multivariate models were calculated, addressing exchangeable working correlations, including both individual-level and cluster-level covariates in these models. Results: A total of 261 Latina seasonal workers participated in either the HEALTHY or the VOICES intervention. There were significant changes over time in cognitive factors (*HIV knowledge, condom use self-efficacy, and adequate knowledge of condom use*), behavioral factors (*condom use, female condom use, and HIV testing*), and communication factors (*talking with friends about HIV prevention and intention to negotiate safe sex with male partners*). Discussion: This study supports the literature suggesting that interventions incorporating social networks can have positive effects on HIV prevention and treatment outcomes, including sustained benefits beyond study periods.



**Keywords:** prevention science; intervention development; social network analysis; Hispanic Americans; HIV/AIDS

Link to article: <https://www.mdpi.com/575148>

## Analyzing the Association Between Depression and High-Risk Sexual Behavior Among Adult Latina Immigrant Farm Workers in Miami-Dade

Hyunjean Kim, Yingxin He, Ryan Pham, Gira J. Ravelo, Patria Rojas, Pura Rodriguez, Grettel Castro, Noël C. Barengo, Juan M. Acuña, Elena Cyrus


Researchers at Florida International University recently published a study examining the relationship between depression and risky sexual behaviors among adult Latina immigrants from a farm working community in Miami-Dade County. Latina immigrants from ages 18-50 years old who have lived in the United States for 3-10 years were surveyed for depression, high-risk sexual behavior, self-esteem, and intrapersonal violence. Of the 234 participants, 15% reported depression and 80% reported that they had engaged in risky sexual behavior within the past 3 months. Although the study found no correlation between depression and risky sexual behavior, a significant association was found between risky sexual behavior and low relationship power, interpersonal violence, and relationship status.

Article  
**Analyzing the Association Between Depression and High-Risk Sexual Behavior Among Adult Latina Immigrant Farm Workers in Miami-Dade County**

Hyunjean Kim <sup>1,\*,†</sup>, Yingxin He <sup>1,†</sup>, Ryan Pham <sup>1,†</sup>, Gira J. Ravelo <sup>2,</sup> Patria Rojas <sup>3,</sup> Pura Rodriguez <sup>1,</sup> Grettel Castro <sup>1,</sup> Noël C. Barengo <sup>1,†</sup>, Juan M. Acuña <sup>1</sup> and Elena Cyrus <sup>4,†</sup>

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† Shared first co-authorship/equal contributions

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**Abstract:** Latinas are often more affected by HIV due to their socio-economic and demographic profiles and are also less likely to receive proper mental health care. Latina immigrants are often even more vulnerable due to socio-economic and cultural factors that place them at higher risk. The current study seeks to examine the association between depression and risky sexual behaviors among adult Latina immigrants from a farm working community in South Miami-Dade County, (Florida, USA). Cross-sectional secondary data analysis was used for responses from a community-based participatory research (CBPR) study. Out of 234 Latina immigrants, 15% reported being depressed and 80% were reported as having engaged in risky sexual behavior. Although no association was found between depression and high-risk sexual behavior, significant secondary findings present associations between risky sexual behavior and low sexual relationship power, interpersonal violence, and relationship status. Implications for future research on depression and risky sexual behaviors among this population are discussed.

**Keywords:** depression; sexual behaviors; risk; Latinas; AIDS; HIV

**1. Introduction**

The United States (US) Latinx population has reached a new high of 58 million, accounting for half of the nation's growth. Yet, despite representing 18% of the US population [1], in 2016, Latinxs accounted for 26% of all new HIV diagnoses, making them disproportionately affected by HIV [2]. Moreover, in 2016, of the 7000 women who received an HIV diagnosis, 19% were Latinas, compared to 17% among their non-Latina White counterparts [2], placing Latinas at an even greater disadvantage for HIV infection.

Some of the factors that have placed Latina immigrants at such a disadvantage are language barriers, acculturation challenges, and economic pressures—factors associated with depression and

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2019, 16, 1120; doi:10.3390/ijerph16071120 [www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph)

Link to article: <https://www.mdpi.com/436082>





# BRIDGING THE GAP

## Latinx Community & Health Equity Research Conference

MIAMI • FLORIDA

**Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

Florida International University: Broad Auditorium (SIPA 125)

Registration begins at 7:30am

Breakfast, Lunch, & Networking Reception Provided

### Presented by

#### **CENTER FOR LATINO HEALTH RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES (CLaRO),**

a collaboration of the University of Miami and Florida International University.

This conference aims to bridge gaps between researchers and South Florida's Latinx community to effectively address health disparities in substance use, violence/trauma, and HIV/AIDS.

CLaRO is funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (#U54MD002266).

**6 CEUs are available: LCSW, LMFT, LMHC**

**Complimentary transportation available**

### **Keynote Speaker:**

Sandro Galea, MD, MPH, PhD

Dean & Robert A. Knox Professor

Boston University, School of Public Health



Robert Stempel School of Public Health & Social Work  
Florida International University, Modesto A. Maidique Campus



Register via:

- QR Code
- [claro.fiu.edu](http://claro.fiu.edu)
- 305-348-7581