3rd Annual
Salud America!
Scientific Summit Report

September 14-16, 2011 • San Antonio, Texas

Salud America!
The RWJF Research Network
to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children
3rd Annual Salud America! Scientific Summit Report

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Salud America!, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), conducted its 3rd Annual Scientific Summit on September 14-16, 2011, at the Hotel Contessa in San Antonio, Texas. This Summit Report is a description of the event. See the reports for any of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd summits here.

Salud America! aims to unite, and increase the number of, Latino researchers engaged in research on environmental and policy solutions to the obesity epidemic among Latino children. The network is directed by the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. For more information, visit www.salud-america.org.
Salud America! Makes Strides to Curb Latino Childhood Obesity

Let’s pretend you know nothing about Latino childhood obesity, but you want to learn.

What do you do first?

Google, of course.

So you head to Google and type “Latino childhood obesity” in the search box.

I’m proud to say that Salud America! is the No. 1 search result, followed by our Latino childhood obesity video at No. 2. Even our SaludToday blog is No. 7.

That means our research network is perfectly situated to continue raising awareness the epidemic, stimulating collaboration and network growth to combat the epidemic, and tout the inspiring work of our 20 pilot investigators.


RWJF funded 20 Salud America! pilot research projects in 2009.

Since then, our pilots have made striking research contributions to reverse Latino child obesity (see pages 6 and 7), as well as varied contributions to beneficial policy changes for healthier lifestyles (see article below).

But our pilots won’t stop when their initial funding ends this year.

Most of our investigators have used their Salud America! pilot funding to get a foothold at their institutions and foster careers in childhood obesity research. And they already have earned or are submitting applications to embark on larger-scale, and hopefully more influential, work based off their successful pilot project results.

Each pilot investigator also has written a four-page research brief to provide scientific evidence to influence the decisions of local, regional, state and/or federal policymakers.

Visit our website to check out the pilots’ research briefs and much more—and remember, it’s also easy to find us via Google.

Amelie Ramirez

Salud America! Makes Strides to Curb Latino Childhood Obesity

Moving the Policy Needle for Latino Childhood Obesity Research

What counts as policy contribution?

It’s not just “passing legislation,” nor is it everything under the sun.

The new Science-Policy-Public-Evaluation Spectra model visually illustrate how researchers can work in and between different levels in the policy development process—which then defines and measures policy contribution, said Dr. Judith Ottoson, an independent evaluation consultant and Salud America! advisor.

“It isn’t just you going along doing your research, it’s how does this connect with policy and with the public interest,” Ottoson said. “[Determining this connection using the spectra is how] we are truly going to contribute and influence policy.”

Ottoson worked with pilots to see how their work fits on the spectra. She said every investigator contributes to policy development at some level.

The first level, or “spectrum,” is the “public”—the degree to which the public views obesity as a problem.

The next spectrum includes multiple stages of “policy”—planning, developing policy, enacting it, and following up post-enactment. Each of these stages in turn includes specific tasks like creating awareness, framing the issue, and mobilization. In the “science” spectrum and “evaluation” spectrum, researchers determine factors that impact policy, assess needs, test interventions and evaluate existing policies.

Researchers’ activities can occur in one or more spectrum.

For example, a researcher’s findings in the science spectrum can influence policy planning by describing the problem, or policy enactment by framing the action, or public perception by engaging an interested public.

Some pilots contribute to policy formation by examining causes of and trends in Latino childhood obesity. Others focus on raising awareness, mobilizing people or reframing issues for the Latino population. Still others assess policy access and equity, to determine whether policies should continue, change or end.

“Even though none of us are at any one place on [the spectra] and we might bounce around or we might swing around, to see how we’re connected is what we need to create a movement which will create the normative change that we want to see long term,” said Marice Ashe, a Salud America! advisor and director of Public Health Law & Policy.

Stay tuned for Ottoson’s journal article that further describes the spectra.

Judith Ottoson

The Science-Policy-Public-Evaluation Spectra
Targeted Food Marketing to Ethnic Minority Youth in the Context of Obesity

Here’s a day in the life of two fictional—but not unusual—youth, Pedro and Javier.

**Morning:** Listen to a J.Lo song Javier downloaded from Dr. Pepper’s website, which tells of Latina Grammy street parties and truck tours to find to get free sodas.

**Lunch:** Use downloaded coupons to get free hot chocolate at McDonald’s.

**After school:** Go to a Cinco de Mayo music concert sponsored by Burger King and get free burgers; at home, eat cookies and go to Nabisco’s branded website to play video games; go to McDonald’s Latino website and play brand-and-sports-mixed video games.

**Dinner:** Drink Coca-Cola and eat food as Pedro’s mother takes photo of meal to upload to Univision contest sponsored by Coca-Cola.

“What we have here is non-stop target marketing” among Latino youth, said Sonya Grier, associate professor of marketing at American University. “Ethnic minorities, especially Latinos, are attractive targets for food and beverage marketers.”

Grier and her colleagues are examining target marketing among minorities.

Target marketing, she said, is when marketers segment the full population into groups—or “target markets”—that respond similarly to marketing actions. That is, these markets will think alike, buy alike, and respond in the same way to marketing prompts.

Marketers are increasingly positioning their product in ways that resonate with target market groups’ needs, wants, beliefs and lifestyles.

But why are young minorities a rising target?

Minority youth consume an average of 13 hours of media content a day, almost two times as much media as white youth, Grier said.

Latino youth specifically—much like the story of Pedro and Javier—are avid Internet and mobile device users, and they’re the leading users of social networking.

They also watch more than two hours of TV than all youth. They are more likely to have a TV in their bedroom and eat meals in front of the TV.

“[Research] shows that minorities may be more favorable to target marketing efforts. Persuasion is driven by the notion that [minority characters in advertisements are] someone that looks like me,” Grier said. “As a minority, that’s nice to see, because you don’t always see it on TV. So you pay more attention, respond more to it, you’re more likely to go with the position or product they advocate.”

See Dr. Grier’s full presentation here.

From interactive mapping to text messaging and multimedia, new technology is taking the fight against Latino childhood obesity to state-of-the-art levels.

Take for example, the work of Dr. Chris Fulcher.

Fulcher, who co-directs the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems (CARES) at the University of Missouri, has created publicly available Internet mapping tools to “look at people and place in more meaningful ways.”

One of those tools is the Childhood Obesity Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The system helps:

- geographically visualize community, regional, and national-level data;
- integrate new spatial data and overlay data for location-specific analyses; and
- generate dynamic reports and “what if” scenarios to address childhood obesity.

“The idea is to blend together the qualitative and the quantitative, pulling together the data—the maps and reports—but also hyper-linking to the videos and putting in minutes to meetings” to be able to tell better stories of what’s happening in obesity in a region, Fulcher said. He added that this also can help policymakers make more informed decisions about access and allocation of resources.

Meanwhile, Dr. Terry Huang is creating a youth-driven social movement by developing youth activists and multimedia activities to enhance community action and empower Latino families to make healthy choices in Omaha, Neb.

The movement, SaludableOmaha, is training youths in health knowledge, team building, social justice, advocacy, marketing, and how to be in front of camera.

SaludableOmaha will finalize a website, increase its membership, enhance social media and peer networking, launch parent and after-school groups, partner with local and national programs and follow and film the movement’s evolution and penetration.

“Youth advocacy can play a role at the individual level to create more agents of change that would then actually create the demand for the environmental and policy supplies that the field emphasizes so greatly these days,” said Huang.

To get Latina girls moving, Dr. Deborah Parra-Medina is using text messaging and more.

Her “Be Fit with Friends” program, based at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, gives local Latina Girl Scouts ages 11-14 many options—from basic fitness equipment like jump ropes to volunteer opportunities to social media, fitness video games and text messaging—to overcome barriers to physical activity.

On their cell phones, girls receive motivational text messages, vote on favorite activities and more. There’s also a Facebook group where girls can post photos, see an events calendar, watch instructional videos on YouTube and interact with each other.

“We think this can open up girls’ and parents’ minds to engaging in physical activity on an ongoing basis,” Dr. Parra-Medina said.
In second grade, Laura Santana decided she wanted to be a leader, so she ran for secretary of her elementary school classroom. She lost.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I guess I’m not a leader. I’ll just stop trying,’” Santana said. She stopped trying for many years.

Then she read a book on leadership by Ron A. Heifetz of Harvard University that suggests that leadership isn’t really a choice.

“There are ways that you step forward and influence and invite people to think about things differently—that is being a leader,” said Santana, now a senior enterprise associate at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). “So if we don’t think of a leader as a person so much as we think of it as a role, it opens up a whole new realm of possibility.”

Developing leadership skills increases one’s ability to deal with complexity and opens eyes to other world views to enrich solutions to problems, said Santana, who has spent more than 20 years facilitating CCL’s leader and leadership development programs in Latin America, Europe, U.S., and the Middle East.

In her experience, which includes implementing an online system to increase the transfer of classroom learning back to the workplace, she said leadership has evolved.

“We’ve moved beyond the top-down, command-and-control thinking to seeing leadership as something that happens between people as they work together, as they interact with each other, as they share ideas and challenge each other’s perspectives,” she said. “We’ve moved beyond focus on the individual to focus on the collective. We’ve moved from images of organizations as a machine…to thinking about groups and teams of people working together as a living, breathing organization.”

So how do you develop leadership skills?

It’s a process that involves building individual (knowing yourself, learning agility, set the stage for high energy, etc.) and collective skills (share your stories, pay it forward and seeking direction, alignment and commitment, etc.), Santana says.

“Think about what else is possible if you interact, share your stories, and hold a vision of what you can create together,” she said.

See Dr. Santana’s full presentation here.

Meet the Experts

Rarely do you get a chance to “talk shop” with leaders in your field. That’s why Salud America! conducted a “Meet the Experts” session before the official start of its 3rd Annual Scientific Summit.

Summit attendees—mainly pilot investigators and their colleagues—were able to meet, network with, and ask questions of some of the most influential researchers and evaluators in the childhood obesity prevention field.

The session featured these experts in these areas:

**The Policy Spectra**
- Larry Green, Dr.P.H., University of California, San Francisco
- Judith Ottoson, Ed.D., Independent Consultant

**New Media/Technology**
- Chris Fulcher, Ph.D., University of Missouri
- Sonya Grier, Ph.D., American University
- Terry Huang, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Deborah Parra-Medina, Ph.D., UT Health Science Center at San Antonio

**Built Environment**
- Laura Brennan, Ph.D., Transtria
- Jim Sallis, Ph.D., San Diego State University

**Healthy Eating**
- Nancy Butte, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine
- Amy Yaroch, Ph.D., Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition

**Technical Assistance/Resources**
- Marice Ashe, J.D., NPLAN
- Charlotte Pratt, Ph.D., NIH
- Erin Hagan, Ph.D., RWJF Center
‘Family’ Pilots Making Progress in Research, Policy

The 11 Salud America! pilot investigators are making significant progress on a variety of nutrition, physical activity and policy issues affecting Latino families. See how much progress they’re making by clicking on their slideshows. And keep checking the Salud America! website in the coming days to see each pilot’s research brief featuring their preliminary results.

Salud America! Family Pilot Investigators

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Slideshow Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Dr. Shari Barkin</td>
<td>Vanderbilt University Medical Center</td>
<td>“Increasing Access to Physical Activity and Use of Community Recreation Centers by Latino Families to Reduce Pediatric Obesity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Nelda Mier</td>
<td>Texas A&amp;M Health Science Center</td>
<td>“Assessing the Built Environment in Colonias to Influence Policy Promoting Physical Activity in Mexican-American Children and Families”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Angela Wiley</td>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>“Abriendo Caminos — Clearing the Path”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Dina Castro</td>
<td>University of North Carolina</td>
<td>“Growing Healthy Kids”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Dharma Cortes</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts</td>
<td>“Esto es Mejor: Improving Food Purchasing Selection Among Low-Income, Spanish-Speaking Latinos Through Social Marketing Messages”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Miriam Vega</td>
<td>Latino Commission on AIDS</td>
<td>“La Familia en la Cocina”</td>
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<td>Dr. Alexy Araz Boudreau</td>
<td>Massachusetts General Hospital</td>
<td>“A Family Approach to Addressing Lifestyle Decision in Obesity and Diabetes”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Harris Huberman</td>
<td>SUNY Downstate Medical Center</td>
<td>“Primero Pasos Parenting Newsletters: A Low-Intensity Approach to Prevent Obesity in Latino Children”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Javier Rosado</td>
<td>Florida State University</td>
<td>“A Measurement of Obesity: BMI Screenings Across Two Settings”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Myriam Torres</td>
<td>University of South Carolina Research Foundation</td>
<td>“Juntas Podemos [Together We Can]: Empowering Latinas To Shape Policy To Prevent Childhood Obesity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Carmen Nevarez</td>
<td>Public Health Institute, California</td>
<td>“Evaluation of the Impact of a Menu-Labeling Program (Salud Tiene Sabor) in South Los Angeles”</td>
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‘Community’ and ‘School’ Pilots Making Progress in Research, Policy

The nine Salud America! pilot investigators are making significant progress on a variety of nutrition, physical activity and policy issues affecting Latino communities and schools.

See how much progress they’re making by clicking on their slideshows.

And keep checking the Salud America! website in the coming days to see each pilot’s research brief featuring their preliminary results.
Healthy Cooking Demo Kicks Off Summit

This year’s summit started a lot like a show on the Food Network.

Participants got an up-close look as a group of chefs demonstrated how to cook healthy dishes—from homemade wheat pasta with arugula and hazelnut pesto to falafel—and toured the new Culinary Institute of America (CIA) campus at San Antonio’s Pearl Brewery, which has transformed from a brewery into the heart of the city’s food scene.

The campus, the third CIA campus in the U.S., aims to promote Latino diversity in the U.S. foodservice industry. It offers many educational opportunities, including Latin American cuisine courses for food enthusiasts.

CIA chef-instructor Michael Katz, who teaches several culinary arts courses at CIA and a former top chef at the Pink Elephant in Florida, whipped up many dishes at the reception. Participants then got to sample the delicious creations, like spicy Thai grilled shrimp.

“We’re excited that the CIA hosted our reception, and we’re even more excited about collaborating with them in the future to improve healthy cooking and eating practices in our region and beyond,” said Salud America! Director Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez.

Learn more about the CIA here.
Agenda: 3rd Annual Salud America! Scientific Summit

Wednesday, September 14, 2011
5:30–8 p.m.
Summit Reception, Culinary Institute of America, San Antonio

Thursday, September 15, 2011
8–9 a.m. Meet the Experts Session

9–9:15 a.m.
Welcome/Introductions/Salud America! Report Card
  Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Salud America!

9:15–10 a.m. Keynote Speech
  Dr. Judith Ottoson, Salud America! Advisor

10–10:45 a.m. Salud America! School Pilot Panel
  Pilots: Drs. Emma Sanchez, Claudia Galindo and Ping Xiang
  Respondent: Dr. Elva Arredondo, San Diego State University

10:45–11 a.m. Break

11 a.m.–Noon
Salud America! Family Pilot Panel 1
  Pilots: Drs. Carmen Nevarez, Alexy Arauz Boudreau, Harris Huberman and Bethsy Morales Reid
  Respondent: Dr. Nancy Butte, Baylor College of Medicine

Noon–1:30 p.m. Lunch and Activity Session
  Activity: Tai Chi Class by Dr. Nameer Kima, founder of Good Spirit Tai Chi Chaun in San Antonio and an assistant professor at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio

1:30–2:15 p.m.
Guest Speaker: “Targeted Food Marketing to Ethnic Minority Youth in the Context of Obesity”
  Dr. Sonya Grier, American University

2:15–3:15 p.m. Salud America! Family Pilot Panel 2
  Pilots: Dr. Shari Barkin, Angela Wiley, Javier Rosado and Nelda Mier
  Respondent: Dr. Jim Sallis, San Diego State University

3:15-3:40 p.m. Break

3:40–4:30 p.m.
Salud America! Family Pilot Panel 3
  Pilots: Drs. Dharma Cortes, Dina Castro and Julie Smithwick-Leone
  Respondent: Dr. Amy Yaroch, Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition

4:30–5:25 p.m.
  Drs. Terry Huang, University of Nebraska Medical Center
  Chris Fulcher, University of Missouri
  Deborah Parra-Medina, UT Health Science Center at San Antonio

Friday, September 16, 2011
8–8:10 a.m.
Welcome Back
  Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Salud America!

8:10–9 a.m.
Salud America! Community Pilot Panel 1
  Pilots: Drs. Cristina Barroso, Norma Olvera and Monika Stodolska
  Respondent: Dr. Laura Brennan, Transtria

9–9:40 a.m.
Guest Speaker: “Building Effective Leadership Skills”
  Dr. Laura Santana, Center for Creative Leadership

9:40–10:00 a.m. Break

10–10:50 a.m.
Salud America! Community Pilot Panel 2
  Pilots: Drs. Robert Dudley, Rebecca London and Meizi He
  Respondent: Dr. Charlotte Pratt, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

10:50–11:45 a.m.
Town Hall: “Pilot Issues and Responsibilities”
  Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, Salud America!
Salud America! Scientific Summit Attendee List

Salud America! Staff
Patricia Chalela
Cliff Despres
Kip Gallion
Sandy Griffith
Kay Haverlah
Amelie G. Ramirez
Rebecca Vega

Salud America! National Advisory Committee
Elva M. Arredondo
Marice Ashe
Laura Brennan
Nancy F. Butte

Robert Garcia
Lawrence W. Green
Erin Hagan
Terry Huang
Laura Kettel Khan
Judith Ottoson
Charlotte A. Pratt
Maya Rockeymoore
James Sallis
Randy Schwartz
Amy Yaroch

Salud America! Pilot Co-Investigators
David Bustos
Roger Figueroa
Amber Hammons
Rachel Ruiz
Jayme Hannay
Mariah Lafleur
Bethsy Morales Reid
Liz Schwarte
Julie Smithwick-Leone
Summer Wilmoth
Ping Ziang

Salud America! Attendees
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Rebecca Adeigbe
Chris Fulcher

Sonya Grier
Nameer Kirma
Michelle Marshall
Denise Mazzei
Christiane Meireles
Mary Nakashian
Luz Myriam Neira
Deborah Parra-Medina
Laura Santana
John K. Worden
Burness Communications
Chuck Alexander
Matt Gruenburg
Elizabeth Wenk
Adam Zimmerman

Salud America! Pilot Investigators

Salud America! The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children
Director: Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez
The Institute for Health Promotion Research
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
(210) 562-6500
http://IHPR.uthscsa.edu

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Institute for Health Promotion Research
UT Health Science Center
San Antonio