



Newsletter

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PRCTRC Retreat

The PRCTRC Annual Retreat was on January 24, 2014. It took place at the Verdanza Hotel in San Juan, facilitating the participation of members of all three institutions. During this activity Governance gave an overall presentation of the 2013 PRCTRC achievements. Later each key functions met to work on their Work Plan for the next 6 months and shared these with the other components of the Consortium.

TRCL Wants YOU & Your Research

Just over three years ago, the PRCTRC set an ambitious goal – to establish a productive and functional consortium that traversed our institutional walls (largely bureaucratic), about 75 miles, and millions of cars. There are several levels of support that were essential in making this consortium successful, but from our (*admittedly biased*) perspective, the Technologies and Resources for Core Laboratories (TRCL) function is as important as any other in promoting inter-institutional efforts that are at the heart of the mission of the PRCTRC. Led by José Rodríguez Medina, PhD, UPR-MSC, with co-leaders Eddy Ríos Olivares, PhD, UCC, and Richard J. Noel Jr., PhD, PSM&HS, the TRCL met the main goal of the first funding period – to formally establish a unified core laboratory of consolidated resources across our institutions and partners. In our secondary goal, to facilitate inter-institutional use of instrumentation and the core facilities of the PRCTRC member institutions and partners (see Figure), we have plenty of room to grow. TRCL resources include facilities for both basic and translational research across the three founding consortium institutions and our partner institutions. Our approaches to meet our mission include: providing technical expertise, expanding access to sophisticated technologies, increasing inter-institutional collaborations and providing training to technical staff, students and faculty. The TRCL combined resources provide ample capacity and a strong drive to expand use of the TRCL to greater numbers of researchers across our institutions and throughout Puerto Rico.

In fact, as we move toward our next funding cycle, our priority has shifted to increasing awareness among scientists throughout our institutions and across the island that TRCL is here for their access. To that end, we've expanded our target training activities based on feedback from our current user base as well as implanted outreach to new communities by presenting the TRCL at local scientific meetings. Find out more and access our resources by contacting a key function leader or visiting the PRCTRC on the web.

Key Components



Bioanalytical Core,
Genomics Translational
Research Unit



Consolidated RCMI and
Institutional Cores



Molecular and Genomics
Core Lab

Intramural Partners

- Proteomics Discovery Core
- AIDS and Emerging Disease lab
- Molecular Genetics Core
- Electron Microscopy Unit
- Behavioral Research and Integrative Neurosciences core

Extramural Partners

- PR-INBRE
- Caribbean Genomics Center (UPR-Mayaguez)
- Computational Systems Biology Core (Univ. Texas San Antonio)
- RTRN Biorepository Working Group

PEARLS

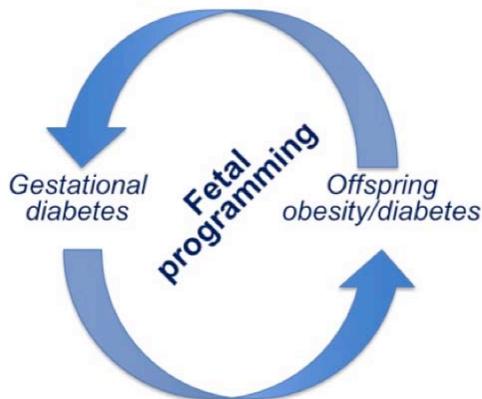
Pregnancy & EARLY Lifestyle Improvement Study



Pregnancy and EARLY Lifestyle improvement Study (PEARLS)

Improving women's diet and physical activity during pregnancy can impact their offspring's future health. Many women in Puerto Rico are overweight before conceiving and are likely to continue gaining weight during pregnancy. However, excessive weight gain during pregnancy has a negative impact in the mom and her unborn child. One important reason to

The vicious cycle of gestational diabetes

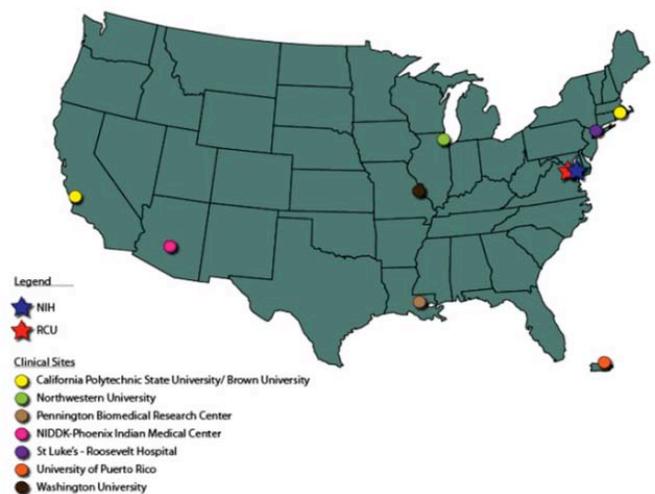


avoid excessive weight gain is because being overweight during pregnancy can raise blood sugar levels and blood pressure, which can lead to gestational diabetes and other serious complications such as pre-eclampsia. Children born to overweight or obese women are at much higher risk of becoming obese during childhood and developing diabetes, hypertension and heart disease later in life.

PEARLS Randomized Clinical Trial

The PEARLS study is among the first randomized clinical trial assessing the impact of a lifestyle intervention in pregnancy and early infancy. This study was developed by a research team from the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus, led by epidemiologists Drs. Kaumudi Joshipura (Medical Sciences Campus

of the University of Puerto Rico) and Paul Franks (Lund University Diabetes Center in Sweden), both of whom are also Professors at Harvard School of Public Health. The study also involves investigators from the Medical School, the Public Health graduate program and the NIDDK. The trial is part of a large multi-center study funded by the National Institutes of Health. PEARLS is designed to understand the impact of



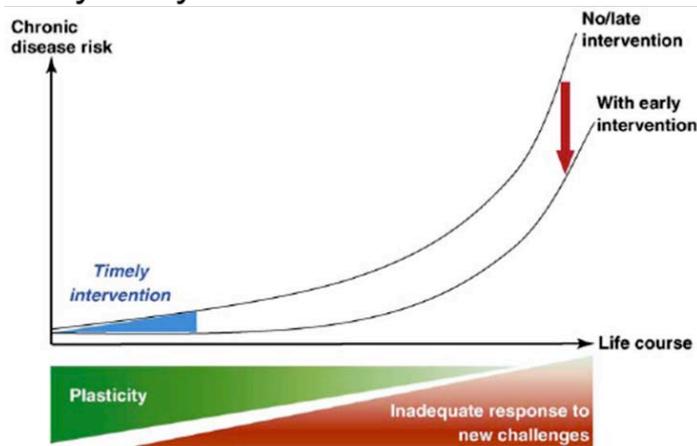
encouraging overweight pregnant women to eat healthier and be more active during their pregnancy and lactation period on the maternal and infant weight during and after pregnancy. Other important questions include whether these changes will improve their blood sugar levels, as well as the health of their babies during their first year of life.

Intervention Approach

Our approach integrates the empowerment theory and the bio-psychosocial model for health and disease. The intervention will focus on health behaviors (with emphasis on physical activity and adequate dietary intake)

directly relating to the pregnancy, and the impact on the infant's BMI and metabolic development and the mother's risk of excessive weight gain and metabolic conditions. Within the empowerment framework, the nutrition and physical activity behavior changes will be promoted by facilitating health self-efficacy, utilizing self-praise, and using active coping skills to address and manage emotions such as stress, depression, or anxiety. In particular, the intervention focuses on improving the behavioral and psychosocial factors needed to achieve and sustain adequate weight gain.

Why Early Intervention Makes Sense



Study Objective

Our primary objective is to investigate whether a lifestyle intervention (nutrition and physical activity) delivered within an empowerment theoretical framework in pregnant women results

in a greater percent of women who gain the appropriate amount of body weight during pregnancy, as defined by the Institute of Medicine.

Goal

The investigators believe that the knowledge the participants obtain, will help improve the long term health of the women and their babies and the health of future generations.

Recruitment

PEARLS is actively recruiting. Women eligible for the study must be 18 or older and enroll in the study before 14 weeks of pregnancy. Major eligibility criteria include: being overweight or obese, free of diabetes mellitus. All women will receive information about health and well-being and will attend regular pre-natal care at the University Hospital. The University Hospital is a highly specialized clinical center which provides pre natal care, access to a state of the art antenatal diagnosis unit with capacity for recordable 4D ultrasound, and a recently renovated labor room facility. The maternity floor also offers rooming in with breastfeeding assistance the WIC sponsored program. During the study, we will collect information about lifestyle, body composition, other health-related factors, and will also collect some biosamples.



PEARLS Contact Information

For referring participants or for more information, contact the Study Coordinator, at (787) 200-7839 or 1-(866) 232-5822;
Email: pearls.study@gmail.com ;

Website: <http://pearlspr.weebly.com/>

Proyecto: Adopte un Gen

Descripción: El “Proyecto Adopte un Gen” es un programa diseñado para que estudiantes graduados y profesionales de la UPR Recinto de Ciencias Médicas puedan tener una pasantía de investigación corta en el Recinto de Mayagüez. El enfoque de estas pasantías será la exposición a nuevas tecnologías de secuenciación de ADN de tipo “Next-generation sequencing”, “Genotyping” y/o aplicación de Bioinformática para el análisis de los datos. El Proyecto proveerá fondos limitados para los materiales y reactivos y servicios necesarios para completar el proyecto propuesto.

Cualifican: Estudiantes de los programas graduados y/o profesionales del Recinto de Ciencias Médicas que sean estudiantes a tiempo completo.

Requisitos para solicitar:

- Resume con datos biográficos
- Propuesta con un mínimo de tres y máximo de seis páginas que contenga los siguientes elementos:
 - Presentación del problema, hipótesis del estudio y objetivo del experimento que se realizará
 - El uso que se le dará a los datos obtenidos a corto plazo (ej. publicación inminente, propuesta de grant en progreso, cumplimiento de un objetivo de tesis, etc.)
 - Presupuesto con justificación
- “Time Table”
- Documentación de aprobación por IRB y/o IACUC o exención del comité según requiera el estudio
- Aprobación del Comité de Bioseguridad si es un proyecto de laboratorio
- Carta de autorización del mentor de investigación

Fecha límite para solicitar: Se aceptaran propuestas desde el 3 de febrero hasta el 28 de febrero, 2014 o hasta que se agoten los fondos. Se otorgaran un mínimo de 4 proyectos.

Cantidad que se otorgara por propuesta: máximo de \$2,500 por proyecto de acuerdo con la justificación

Someta su propuesta antes del 28 de febrero de 2014 a: Dr. Juan Carlos Martínez Cruzado juancarlos.martinez@upr.edu y Dr. José R. Rodríguez Medina jose.rodriguez123@upr.edu





Awards for Taller Salud

Author: Wanda I. Figueroa-Cosme, MD

Members: Wanda I. Figueroa-Cosme, MD; Patricia Noboa Ortega, PhD; Christine Miranda-Díaz, MPHE, PhD; Alana Feldman-Taller Salud; Edna Acosta PhD-Office of Community Research Engagement (OCRE)

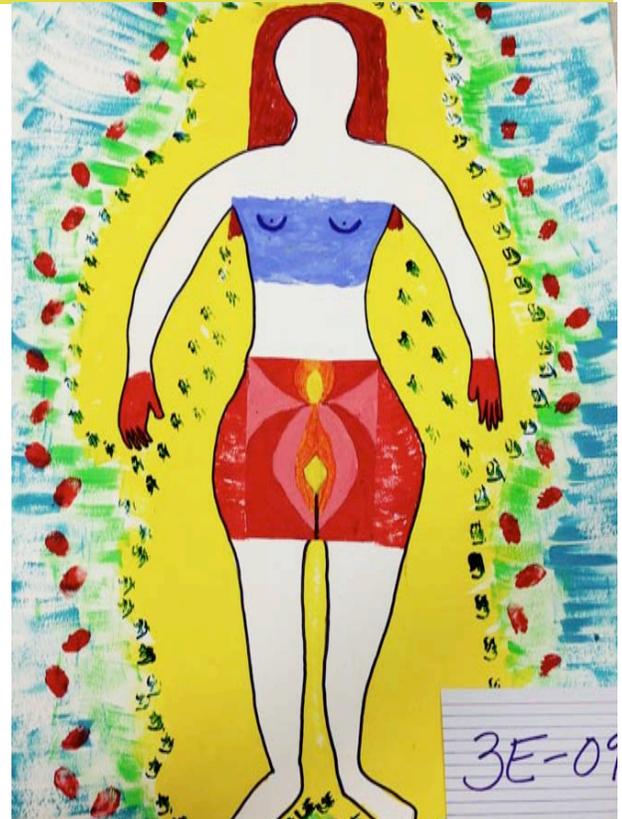
The Pilot Project *Arte con Salud* is an innovative sexual-health tailored intervention developed by Taller Salud, Inc. *Arte con Salud* was funded by AIDS United and currently receives support from OCRE and the Puerto Rico Clinical Translational Research Consortium (PRCTRC). This effort is collaboration between the academia including Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC) and UPR-Cayey and the community-based organization Taller Salud, Inc.

Taller Salud received an award from ONUSIDA (UNAIDS) in recognition of the *Arte con Salud* intervention as a good practice and innovative approach about gender, young women, and HIV in Latin America. *Arte con Salud* is a multidisciplinary intervention that incorporates sexual education, art, sexual negotiation, HIV prevention, and intergenerational communication.

Another Puerto Rican woman, L'Orangelis Thomas, was also recognized by UNAIDS for her narrative "*Amalgama*", a narrative about the complexity of identity and life as woman living with HIV.

Using art as a means for learning, we expect that the pilot project *Arte con Salud* will serve and be distinguished as a tailored HIV prevention program for Hispanic/Latino women.

"*Arte con Salud*," as a collaborative study between academia and community wants to acknowledge and recognize the great work and enthusiasm of the research facilitator, Lourdes Inoa, and program coordinator, Tania Rosario from Taller Salud Inc.; Deborah Roldán, Magdalys Velázquez, and Kristal Meléndez research assistants from the UPR-Cayey; and Frances Hernández, research assistant from OCRE.

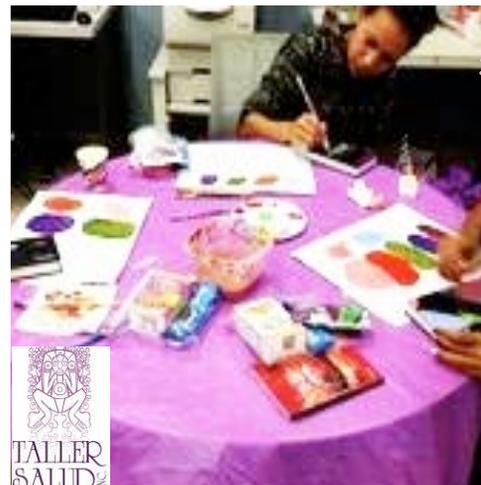


PRCTRC congratulates Taller Salud, Inc., for these accomplishments!

The article and video of this and the other 7 selections can be access in <http://www.onusida-latina.org/es/concurso-buenas-practicas-2013.html> - page

Source: El Nuevo Día

<http://m.elnuevodia.com/onupremiaaorganizacionyajovenboricua-1694747.html>.



“Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value”

Albert Einstein

This is the first of several publications by the **R**egulatory, **K**nowledge **S**upport (RKS) unit for the PRCTRC Newsletter. The RKS main goal is to facilitate and provide support to translational researcher in the ethical implementation of human research. Our principal purpose and commitment is to guide our investigators and staff in the codes, policies, and principles of the local and federal regulations required to conduct a successful research.

Why regulations matter?

Authors: Dr. Robert Hunter & Dr. Wanda I. Figueroa

We recognize the excellent ethical principles and professionalism of our researcher's and the nearly universal initial view of many that the regulatory aspect of research in humans is cumbersome, prone to obstacle imposition and bureaucratic in nature. Nevertheless if we consider and remember events in recent history occurring in Tuskegee, Boston, Seoul and New York amongst many, the ethical conduct of research is of undisputable relevance. The regulatory process in place is the only mechanism in which our credibility with human subjects, our lawmakers, members of the community and society in general will be maintained and incremented. The altruism of human beings who consent to participate in translational research endeavors needs to be accompanied by the transparency, rectitude and honesty that the research regulatory process provides.

Our unit exists to provide individual support and training to each investigator, which will allow the process of regulatory approval to go smoothly.

Call us and find out!

- Wanda I. Figueroa (UCC)- wanda.figueroa@uccaribe.edu
- Adelma Rivera (MSC)- adelma.rivera@upr.edu
- Wanda Vega (PSM)- wvega@psm.edu



Rules & Regulations

PRCTRC Personnel

We are happy to announce some changes in our personnel roster

Valerie Wojna, MD
Pilot Projects Program Leader

Dr. Valerie Wojna is a Professor of Neurology at UPR-MSC. She has been working as part of our Internal Advisory Committee and will now lead the Pilots Projects Program for the PRCTRC.



Hector Colón, PhD
Community Research & Engagement Leader

Dr. Hector Colón –Jordán is an Associate Professor of Sociomedical Research Evaluation at UPR-MSC. He will lead the Community Research & Engagement Key Function for the PRCTRC.



Wanda Figueroa-Cosme, MD
Regulatory Knowledge and Support Leader

Dr. Wanda I. Figueroa-Cosme, is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Universidad Central del Caribe and has been working as the Research Subject Advocate in UCC. She will now lead the Regulatory Knowledge & Support Key Function for the PRCTRC.



Yashira García-Flores, BS
Technologies and Resources for Core Laboratories
Technician

Yashira García-Flores, BS is a Molecular Biology Technician-Molecular Biology and Genomics Core at the Ponce School of Medicine & Health Sciences.

