



# Prevention Research Center

New York University • NYU School of Medicine

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[http://prevention-research.  
med.nyu.edu](http://prevention-research.med.nyu.edu)

## NYU Prevention Research Center Officially Launched

February 12, 2010 marked the beginning of a new chapter in NYU's history of public health leadership, as the deans of the university's various health-related schools gathered at the Torch Club to celebrate the official launch of the NYU Health Promotion and Prevention Research Center (NYU PRC). Drs. Robert Grossman, Dean of the NYU School of Medicine, and Robert Berne, Executive Vice President for Health addressed the audience consisting of academic and community partners, and described the important role and contributions of the NYU PRC.

*The mission of the NYU PRC is to build and enhance community capacity and leadership for health promotion and disease prevention across diverse populations by using community-based participatory research (CBPR) and community health worker (CHW) model approaches.*



Robert Bern, Executive Vice President for Health, NYU;  
Mariano Rey, Principal Investigator, NYU PRC;  
Robert Grossman, Dean and CEO, NYU Langone Medical Center;  
Nadia Islam, Research Director, NYU PRC

## NYU PRC Receives \$3.2 Million Supplemental Grant From CDC For Comparative Effectiveness Research

The NYU PRC received a two-year \$3.2 million award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish a Comparative Effectiveness Research Program (CER) focused on hypertension and colorectal cancer health disparities in African-American men in New York City. The NYU PRC is one of only four of the 37 PRC research facilities nationwide to receive this prestigious award.



The study will be led by R. Scott Braithwaite, MD, associate professor, Department of Medicine; Joseph Ravenell, MD, assistant professor, Department of Medicine; Mariano Rey, MD, principal investigator of the NYU PRC and director of the NYU Institute of Community Health and Research; and Chau Trinh-Shevrin, DrPH, assistant professor, Department of Medicine.

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# PRC NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NYU NOPREN Tackles Nutrition and Obesity Policy in NYC

The NYU PRC received Special Interest Project (SIP) funding in 2009 to support the NYU Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN) Coordinating Center. NYU is one of only five NOPREN Coordinating Centers across the nation.

NOPREN is a multidisciplinary, comprehensive research center that coordinates, develops, and disseminates evidence-based multilevel policy recommendations to address nutrition and obesity prevention for racial and ethnic minorities in urban settings. By evaluating existing policies with a focus on racial and ethnic minorities, NOPREN tailors its recommendations to improve the availability and accessibility of healthy food in diverse communities.

NOPREN community and government partners are preparing a cohesive set of policy recommendations building on existing research on nutrition and obesity prevention in New York City and State. Current projects include a qualitative examination of the menu labeling initiative implemented in NYC's chain restaurants, assessing obstacles to people's use of calorie information to choose healthier foods. NOPREN is also working with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on an evaluation project in New York City schools, assessing the impact of placing "water jets" (specialized water fountains) in school cafeterias.

PRCs have the opportunity to apply for CDC-SIP funding on an annual basis to support additional projects across a variety of health disparities areas.

*NOPREN is led by Brian Elbel, PhD and Courtney Abrams, MA, in conjunction with academic partners at the NYU School of Medicine, College of Nursing, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.*

## CDC Visits PRC and Community Partner Sites

**May 26, 2010** Six officers from the CDC, including CDC PRC Program Director Dr. Eduardo Simoes, spent two full days in New York for the NYU PRC's first site visit. The officers visited the PRC's community partner sites, including the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, the Korean Community Services Senior Center in Flushing, Queens, and the Gurdwara Makhan Shah Lobana, a program site of United Sikhs. They were also given updates on the development of Project RICE, the NYU PRC training programs, evaluation plans, dissemination and communication strategies across the PRC, and community and academic partnerships. CDC officials expressed immense appreciation for the amount of progress the NYU PRC had been able to make after only eight months of funding. Thank you to our community and academic partners for making the site visit a huge success!



**Find out  
more**

More information about the NYU PRC and its programs can be found at:  
<http://prevention-research.med.nyu.edu>

## First Learning Exchange Focuses on CHWs as Agents of Change

The NYU PRC hosted its first learning exchange, "Building Bridges: Community Health Workers as Agents of Change" on Thursday, April 1, 2010 at the NYU Langone Medical Center. Over seventy individuals representing academic, healthcare, advocacy/policy, governmental, and community-based organizations were in attendance. Sergio Matos, the Executive Director of the Community Health Worker Network of NYC, moderated and opened the session by describing the history of CHWs and their role in the health care system. Drs. Miyong Kim, from the School of Nursing of Johns Hopkins University, Ranjita Misra, from the Center for the Study of Health Disparities of Texas A&M University, and her colleague Padmini Balagopal, all experts in the field of community health worker (CHW) interventions, shared lessons learned, successes, and challenges. Rico Foz, Henry Soliveres, and Mamnunul Haq, CHWs from NYU's DREAM and AsPIRE programs, shared their personal experiences serving as CHWs in their communities.

*The event was recorded and is available on iTunesU for download. To access the file, go to the iTunes Store and enter "NYU School of Medicine" into the search box. Next, click on "Community Engagement", and then click on "get tracks".*



## First Round of CHW Training Program Completed

**October 4, 2010** Four Project RICE CHWs completed the first round of the NYU PRC's Community Health Worker (CHW) training program. The training program was developed in collaboration with investigators from the NYU PRC, Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, and the Community Health Worker Network of New York State. The training provides participants with a strong foundation in communication, counseling, service coordination, capacity-building, advocacy, research, and disease and illness skills.



Sergio Matos (seated) of the CHW Network of New York State, led the first round of CHW training.

Participants appreciated and enjoyed the Popular Education training methods used, and felt that the training prepared them well for working with clients. As one CHW shared, "These experiences will enrich my work as I am better able to understand the issues people face as recipients of care and as those doing the caring." Another felt that the training prepared him/her to "empower patients to advocate and learn to become independent in taking care of their health. The program also empowers us, the CHWs, and lights a fire within us."

A second round of the training will be offered beginning in January for the NYU Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) Program CHWs and newly hired Project RICE CHWs. Graduated Project RICE CHWs will attend additional continuing education sessions.

# COMMUNITY PROJECT NEWS

## Formative Study Launched in Korean and South Asian Communities

The NYU PRC and our core community partners- Korean Community Services, New York Taxi Workers Alliance, and United Sikhs-implemented the first phase of its core research study to promote diabetes prevention in the Korean and South Asian communities in New York City, Project RICE.

A total of 600 health screenings and 600 diabetes resources and needs assessment surveys were conducted from May to November at local schools, churches, gurdwaras, and community-based organizations to gather descriptive information on access to care, health behaviors, and beliefs as related to diabetes prevention, as well as clinical data on risk factors for diabetes and cardiovascular disease in these communities. A series of four focus groups were also conducted to gain insight on health promotion and prevention strategies used by community members.

*Project RICE (Reaching Immigrants through Community Empowerment) is the core research project of the NYU PRC. It is a five-year community-driven initiative to promote diabetes prevention among Korean and South Asian immigrants in New York City using a community health worker (CHW) model. Project RICE is conducted in partnership with local health providers, and community and faith-based organizations.*

Ted Ryo, a Project RICE CHW, takes blood pressure readings at a KCS Health Fair in Flushing, NY.



Attendees receiving screenings at UNITED SIKHS Diabetes Screening Event, held at The Sikh Cultural Society in Richmond Hill, NY.



## NYU PRC Receives CER Grant From CDC

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The multidisciplinary research team will also include NYU Langone faculty investigators, the NYU School of Medicine's Division of General Internal Medicine, NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, and the NYU College of Nursing. A diverse group of community-based and faith-based organization partners are also involved in this program.

"Addressing health disparities is a top priority for NYU, and this grant teams up our outstanding leaders in comparative effectiveness research with our superb Health Promotion and Prevention Research Center, working closely with community partners, to tackle some of the most important public health issues among African-American men," said Vivian S. Lee, MD, PhD, MBA, senior vice president, vice dean for science and chief scientific officer. "We are thrilled that the NYU PRC was recognized for being able to bring fresh scientific approaches to critical disease prevention and control issues, and that we are one of only four centers to receive this award from the CDC."



## Introducing Three New Project RICE CHWs

The NYU PRC welcomed the addition of three new community health workers (CHWs) to the Project RICE team, who participated in a CHW training program this summer.

Asim Akhtar works with New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA) as a CHW for South Asian taxi drivers. He has been an active organizer and a taxi driver for 4 years and has been working with NYTWA on several of their health and rights initiatives. Rucha Kavathe works with United Sikhs and serves as a CHW for the Sikh community. Rucha has vast experience with health communications, and has been working with United Sikhs on their media and communications campaigns, as well as new health initiatives in the Sikh community. Ted Ryo coordinates Project RICE activities in the Korean community through Korean Community Services (KCS). Ted has worked with KCS on immunization and other health promotion programs.

Project RICE CHWs have been actively coordinating health screenings, administering needs assessment surveys, and facilitating focus groups in the Korean and South Asian communities this summer and fall. These individuals will serve the critical role of delivering the Project RICE intervention to community members at risk for diabetes. The full intervention is scheduled to begin in Spring of 2011.

Project RICE CHWs  
Asim Akhtar and  
Rucha Kavathe,  
along with Gurdwara  
Committee Members  
and health fair  
volunteers.



## Latino Health Initiatives: Putting Latinos in Control of their Healthcare

The purpose of the Latino Health Initiatives (LHI) of the NYU PRC is to build community capacity and to provide education and resources to Latinos about the major health issues affecting their communities. The LHI projects will focus on documenting the current health status of Latinos in New York City and mapping available health, community, and government resources. Community-based participatory research efforts will be undertaken to understand the most effective strategies to eliminate health disparities in Latino communities. This work will be achieved in conjunction with a wide range of community partners who are leading the effort to address health inequities among New York City Latinos.

The LHI core project is the *Educating Latinos for Better Resources, Outreach, and Nutrition Excellence (EL-BRONX)*, a community assessment aimed at understanding the healthcare needs, resources, and challenges of Latino individuals with diabetes and their family members. The goal of the project is to develop a family based community intervention to assist in the prevention and management of diabetes in Latino communities throughout New York City.

## NYU PRC and Community Partners Participate in National Community Committee Conference in Seattle, WA

**October 10-13, 2010** NYU PRC community partners from Korean Community Services (KCS) and United Sikhs represented the NYU PRC at the National Community Committee (NCC) annual planning meeting hosted by the PRC at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA. The NCC is one of the seven sub-committees that guide the Prevention Research Center (PRC) program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and provides a platform for community representatives to give input on chronic disease prevention and management at the national level. Representatives from 37 PRCs across the country participated in the meeting and worked on several initiatives to help local community committees to better serve the individual PRC centers as well as the national program through community-based participatory research (CBPR), as well as to build capacity and sustainability within their communities.

Linda Lee (KCS) discusses community-based participatory research with other NCC Representatives.



Of the 37 current PRCs, only two others represent Asian American communities, and the NYU PRC is the only one currently working with the South Asian community. Rucha Kavathe, Media and Communications Coordinator for United Sikhs, said: "As an organization, United Sikhs sees this as an opportunity to advocate nationally for health concerns of not only the Sikh community, but also the South Asian communities at large and bring those voices to discussions on how marginalized and disadvantaged communities can have the best possible access to health information and services." Linda Lee, Associate Executive Director at KCS, said her participation on the NCC allowed her to learn more about CBPR, the importance and need for it, and how KCS can use CBPR as a tool to advocate for health concerns in the Korean and Asian communities. "This opportunity also provides an avenue for our organization to effectively create awareness and provide education of health disparities in our communities at the national level."

The NYU PRC community partners are actively involved in NCC activities. Rucha Kavathe serves on the Communications Committee, and Linda Lee was elected Co-Chair of the Content Committee this year.

## Staff SPOTLIGHT & Announcements

### NYU PRC Receives ASPH/CDC/PRC Minority Health Fellow



**Shilpa Patel**, a second-year doctoral student in the NYU Steinhardt Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health was awarded the ASPH/CDC/PRC Minority Health Fellowship for two years of training and guided research with the NYU PRC. Since 2002, the CDC and the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) have selected 38 doctoral-level students of ethnic or racial minority origin for these fellowships with PRCs across the country. Shilpa's research will explore the access and utilization of diabetes services among Asian American immigrants in a nationally representative sample compared with data on Asian American immigrants in New York City collected through Project RICE. Shilpa is originally from New Jersey, and earned her BS from Rutgers University with a double major in Public Health and Psychology. In 2007, she earned her MPH from Columbia University, with a concentration in Effectiveness and Outcomes Research. Shilpa is

interested in research that evaluates how health services and policies affect health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations.



### NYU PRC Acknowledges Intern Ayesha Ghosh

**Ayesha Ghosh**, a second-year MPH student concentrating in Health Promotion at Columbia University, completed a two-semester internship with Project RICE. Ayesha helped to administer diabetes needs and resources surveys with South Asian study participants at community health fairs and screening events this summer and fall. She also conducted a literature review of diabetes prevention interventions and determinants of physical activity in the South Asian community to inform the development of a culturally competent diabetes prevention curriculum for the project. Ayesha has experience working with breast health education and outreach as well as HIV/AIDS prevention among youth. She expects to graduate in May 2011 and hopes to continue her work on health promotion in minority communities.



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