



CRECH Newsletter Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health

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From the Director



Sherman A. James, Ph.D.

The accomplishments of CRECH over the past three years have exceeded my expectations. The creativity, hard work, and dedication of our three Associate Directors (Drs. Neighbors, Raghunathan, and Schulz), and of our Administrative Assistant (Ms. Lynda Fuerstnau), are largely responsible for the richness and variety of programs we have been able to launch in such a short period of time. Our greatest

asset, however, and the very reason for our existence as an organization are the students. We have been privileged to work with an extremely talented, very diverse group of students whose social critiques and tangible intellectual products validate the need for the kind of "space" that CRECH provides within a major research university such as the University of Michigan. In addition to creating a space where

students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds can exchange ideas with each other, and with their faculty mentors, about the fundamental causes of (and possible solutions to) persistent racial and ethnic health disparities, CRECH actively seeks interdisciplinary dialogue and programmatic activities with like-minded organizations on this campus, and elsewhere. In this first volume of the CRECH

(continued on page 2)

CRECH Training Programs

Because CRECH is committed to reducing racial and ethnic disparities in health, the training of scientists from groups that have been historically underrepresented in leadership roles in public health is a high priority. CRECH training programs are designed to prepare students to work effectively as public health research scientists in multiethnic, multicultural settings.

Dr. Harold W. Neighbors directs CRECH's four training components: 1) the Paul B. Cornely Postdoctoral Fellowship is a two-year, residential training program for Ph.D. level scholars. Its objective is to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of university-based public health faculty. This fellowship facilitates acquisition or enhancement of research skills which can be directed to solving important public health problems. Cornely postdoctoral fellows spend most of their time preparing manuscripts for publication. They work closely with a U-M SPH faculty member with similar research interests. 2) With funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences' Division of Minority Opportunities for Research, in 2000 CRECH established a training program for doctoral students from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in the fields of epidemiology, health management, and health behavior. CRECH predoctoral fellows receive tuition, benefits, and a travel allowance. Faculty mentoring is an essential part of the program. Students are appointed as Graduate Research Assistants and paired with a faculty mentor who works with them throughout their training. Skills in quantitative and qualitative data analysis, scientific writing, manuscript preparation, proposal development, and formal presentations at professional meetings are emphasized. 3) The Graduate Student Research Internship sponsors a limited number of Master's degree students from departments within the School of Public Health. Students are selected for this program without consideration of race or ethnicity. 4) The CRECH Summer Public Health Scholars Program was established with funding from the University of Michigan's Office of Academic and Multicultural Affairs. Its purpose is to expose undergraduates to public health research with an emphasis on racial and ethnic health disparities. Working in conjunction with the Rackham Graduate School, the CRECH Summer Scholars Program identifies undergraduates from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and matches them with faculty mentors for an intensive 10-week apprenticeship.



Harold W. Neighbors, Ph.D.
Associate Director for
Research Training

ON THE INSIDE

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Special Focus</i> | 2 |
| <i>Annual Public Health and Human Rights Lecture</i> | 2 |
| <i>Cornely Postdoctoral Fellowships</i> | 3 |
| <i>NIH Predoctoral Fellows Speak Out</i> | 3 |
| <i>CRECH Visiting Scientist</i> | 3 |
| <i>Recent Publications</i> | 3 |
| <i>Research Update</i> | 4 |



(From the Director continued from front page)

Newsletter, we highlight the major educational, training, and research activities undertaken to date. We welcome your feedback as well as your participation in all CRECH events.

The CRECH Newsletter is published once a year to inform the public about educational, research and training activities of the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

DIRECTOR

Sherman A. James, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Harold W. Neighbors, Ph.D.
Trivellore E. Raghunathan, Ph.D.
Amy J. Schulz, Ph.D.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lynda J. Fuerstnau
E-mail: lfirsti@umich.edu

Web site: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/crech/>

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Special Focus

CRECH and IRWG Co-Host Think Thank on Intersectionality and Health



Amy Schulz, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Qualitative Research

Scholars at CRECH (Amy Schulz, Sherman James, Edna Viruell-Fuentes) and at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWG) (Abby Stewart, Janet Malley) have spent the past two years examining relationships among ethnicity, gender, culture and health. This interdisciplinary dialogue brought together scholars from the humanities, social sciences, public health and medicine to examine gender, race and ethnicity as social constructs that define relations of power and influence. They planned a three-phase process, which began in the fall of 1999 and will continue through 2002. The first phase of this

process included a study group (1999-2000) and speaker series (1999-2002). Scholars from Sociology, Public Health, Nursing, American Culture, Psychiatry, Medicine and Social History met regularly over a two-year period to consider such issues as historical constructions of masculinity and their implications for health, as well as interpretations of epidemiological studies highlighting patterns of health as they vary with intersections of gender, race and ethnicity. The speaker series included presentations on topics such as the portrayal of race and gender in pharmaceutical advertisements and their implications for prescriptions of medications. The second phase of the process, which began in the fall of 2000, culminated in an intensive "Think Tank" attended by 25 faculty and students on May 18-19, 2001. The Think Tank brought

together six scholars who presented brief papers outlining the use of intersectionality in thinking about a particular area of health research. UM's Marcia Inhorn (SPH, Anthropology) presented (with coauthor K. Lisa Whittle) a critical analysis of epidemiological research, applying an intersectionality perspective; Mieko Yoshihama (SSW) discussed immigrant women's experiences with domestic violence; and Ram Mahalingham (Psychology, WS) showed how cultural narratives might shape health experiences. Three national experts also provided papers: Hortensia Amaro (Boston University) discussed HIV as it is experienced among women in vulnerable populations; Leith Mullings (City University of New York Graduate Center) discussed life circumstances as these contribute to birth outcomes among African American women; and Leslie Wolfe (Center for Women Policy Studies) outlined how an intersectional approach can be built into policy considerations. The six papers are available as working papers from CRECH by contacting Lynda Fuerstnau.

The third phase of the process will unfold over the 2001/2002 academic year, culminating in a national conference on Intersectionality and Health with the goal of influencing both health policy and research.

The 3rd Annual Distinguished Lecture on Public Health and Human Rights



Vine Deloria, Jr., LLD

This annual lecture, supported in part by the King, Chavez, Parks Visiting Scholars Program of the University of Michigan, is designed to promote awareness of the inextricable

connections between public health and human rights. The inaugural lecture (*Public Health and Human Rights: Notes from the Field*) was given in 1999 by June E. Osborn, M.D., sixth president of the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation in New York and former Dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan. The 2000 lecture (*HIV/AIDS and Human Rights in Africa: A Time to Respond*) was given by Allen A. Herman, M.D., Ph.D., the founding Dean of the National School of Public Health of the Republic of South Africa. In 2001, Vine Deloria, Jr. LLD, the noted American Indian activist and scholar ("Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto," "God is Red," among other works) spoke on *Daily Life on American Indian Reservations*. Deloria's visit was co-sponsored by the Rackham Graduate School, the UM American Culture/Native Studies Program, the Native American Students Association, and the Native American Public Health Students Association.



(left—right) Shawna Leigh Red Cloud, Amy Schulz, Vine Deloria, Cheryl Samuels, and Hap McCue



Current and Future Cornely Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Briggett Ford received her Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh in 1998. Dr. Ford's research on the effect of violence on African-American women and the misdiagnosis of African Americans in treatment for mental health problems resulted in two presentations at professional meetings and an article ("Violence and Trauma: Predicting the Impact on the Well-being of African-American Women with Severe Mental Illness") to be published in the journal *Violence and Victims*. "I consider my time as a Cornely Postdoctoral Fellow as one of the most challenging and rewarding periods of my career (life). The collegial atmosphere fostered at CRECH gave me the opportunity to fine tune the skills I will need to become a successful scholar and researcher. I feel privileged to have had the chance to work with everyone affiliated with CRECH," Ford said.

Dr. Cheryl Samuels received her Ph.D. in Clinical and Personality Psychology from the University of Michigan in 1997. Dr. Samuels' work focuses on the long-term effects of colonization on the health of American Indians who attended native residential schools in their youth. Her work, partly funded by the UM Office of the Vice President, investigates psychological adaptations American Indians had to make to these institutions and the long-term impact on their physical and mental health.

Drs. Ford and Samuels will complete their fellowships in July and December 2001, respectively.

Dr. Tamara A. Baker, received her Ph.D. in Biobehavioral Health from Penn State University in August 2001. The title of her dissertation was *Interrelationships Among Arthritis, Pain, Physical Functioning, and Depressive Symptomatology in Older African Americans: Health Predictors, Prevalence, and Outcomes*. Dr. Baker will begin her

Paul B. Cornely postdoctoral fellowship in September 2001.

I am committed to continuing my program of research on arthritis and other chronic conditions, and the impact it has on aged minority populations. This will allow me to further investigate the social, emotional, psychological, and physical implications musculoskeletal disorders have among older African Americans. This level of commitment will thus provide an avenue that will give me the opportunity to fulfill a long-term career goal in the public health sector.
— Tamara A. Baker, Ph.D.

CRECH/NIH Predoctoral Fellows Speak Out

Debbie Barrington, who received her MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Boston University says "My experience as a CRECH fellow thus far has been one that has enhanced my personal and professional growth." Jose Siri, a doctoral student in Epidemiology noted, "My participation in CRECH has been consistently thought-provoking and enriching on both personal and academic levels." Carla Stokes, HBHE doctoral student, whose work focuses on the intersections among ethnicity, gender,

youth popular culture, and health, stated, "My experience has been significantly enhanced by participating in the CRECH doctoral training program. This unique opportunity has provided an intellectually stimulating, rewarding, and supportive environment for innovative research and scholarship." HBHE doctoral candidate, Edna Viruell Fuentes states, "CRECH has provided me a much-needed intellectual home base, where I am nourished by diverse ideas and people as I explore my

(continued on page 4)

CRECH Distinguished Visiting Scientist

Co-sponsored by CRECH and the UM Program in Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Jaime Breilh, MD, MS, PHD, Senior Scientist at the Health Research & Advisory Center in Quito, Ecuador and a member of the Ecuador Academy of Medicine taught a short course in February 2001 entitled "Public Health in Latin America: A Critical Appraisal." Twenty students, 15 undergraduate and five graduate, took the four-week course.

On February 14, 2001, Dr. Breilh presented a public seminar at the UM-SPH entitled "Gender, Ethnicity and Health in the Crossfire: Inequality and Hope." Breilh's address, part of CRECH's bi-weekly lecture series, was co-sponsored by the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and La Salud, a UM-SPH student organization focusing on Latino/a health.



Jaime Breilh, MD, MS, Ph.D.

Recent Publications of Note

James, S.A., Schulz, A.J., van Olphen, J. **Social Capital, Poverty, and Community Health: An Exploration of Linkages.** In *Building Social Capital in Urban Communities*, S. Saegert, P. Thompson, and M. Warren (Eds.) Sage Publications, Forthcoming (2002).

Neighbors, H.W., Williams, D. **The Epidemiology of Mental Disorders among African Americans: 1985-2000.** In R. L. Braithwaite & S. E. Taylor (Eds.), *Health Issues in the Black Community* (Second Edition, pp. 99-128). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. (2000)

Ragunathan, T.E., Lepkowski, J.M., Van Hoewyk, J. and Solenberger, P.W. (2001). **A Multivariate Technique for Multiply Imputing Missing Values Using a Sequence of Regression Models.** *Survey Methodology*, June 2001 issue. (Also available as a SMP working paper series (1997), Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor).

Schulz, A.J., Parker, E.A., Israel, B.A., Fisher, T. **"Social Context, Stressors and Disparities in Women's Health."** *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association.* Forthcoming (2001)



Research Update



Trivellore E. Raghunathan, Ph.D.,
Associate Director for
Quantitative Research

Hypertension in Black Americans: A Life Course Approach

Principal Investigators
SA James, Ph.D.
TE Raghunathan, Ph.D.

Increasingly, researchers are recognizing that risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) in adulthood is rooted in the social and material life conditions of childhood, and that these childhood conditions may predict risk for CVD above and beyond traditional adulthood indicators of socioeconomic status (SES) such as education, occupation or income. Nowhere is this life course perspective on CVD risk more important than in the case of African Americans, especially the generation

that “came of age” in the U.S. South in the 1950s and 60s, the peak years of the modern Civil Rights Movement. While some African Americans in this age cohort were able to take advantage of these new opportunities for economic advancement, others were less fortunate – resulting in markedly different life experiences thereafter in terms of the intensity of exposure to social and economic hardship. In August 2000, CRECH received funding from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, at NIH, to quantify the impact of life long exposure to social and economic adversity among African Americans on their risk for developing hypertension by early middle age. This research question is being addressed in the Pitt County (NC) cohort, a probability sample of 1,784 African Americans whose health status was first assessed in 1988 when members of the cohort were between 25-50 years of age. A second wave of data collection occurred in

1993. The current study, the third wave of data collection, will re-examine the original cohort, relating adverse changes in blood pressure over a 13-14 year period (1988 - 2001/02) to participants’ accounts of their exposure to adversity from childhood to the present in three major areas: (1) economic resources, (2) social support/integration; and (3) racial discrimination. The “Event History Calendar,” an innovative methodology that enhances recall accuracy by anchoring questions about economic resources, social support, and exposure to racial discrimination to major occurrences of life events like starting high school, marriage, birth of first child, or first job after high school/college, is being used to collect the life course data. Data collection will conclude by March 2002.

Co-investigators on this project include Robert Belli, Ph.D.; David Williams, Ph.D.; Kirsten Alscer, Ph.D., and David Strogatz, Ph.D.

(CRECH/NIH Predoc Fellows continued from page 3)

own research agenda on immigration and health.” Darian Tarver and Naima Wong are both pursuing doctoral degrees in Health Behavior & Health Education. Tarver, whose research interests include adolescent mental health and violence states, “The family environment that was fostered through CRECH made my transition process easy.” Wong notes, “My participation in CRECH has broadened my thinking on the concepts of race, culture and ethnicity and the provocative debate about their overlapping definitions and relevance to health research.” Wong’s research focuses on violence prevention in African American adolescents.

Visit <http://www.sph.umich.edu/crech/training.html> for additional information on CRECH’s Training Programs

MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health, established in 1998, provides a forum for basic and applied public health research on relationships among ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and health. The Center seeks to develop new interdisciplinary frameworks for understanding these relationships while promoting effective collaborations among public health academicians, health providers, and local communities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

109 S. Observatory Street, Room 3072
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-2029
Phone: (734) 647-6665
FAX: (734) 647-6686

We’re on the Web!
<http://www.sph.umich.edu/crech/>

Congratulations!

Sherman A. James, Director of CRECH, was one of 60 individuals nationwide elected to the *Institute of Medicine*, National Academy of Sciences in October 2000. He also received the **2001 Alonzo Smythe Yerby Award** sponsored by the Division of Public Health Practice at Harvard University’s School of Public Health. The Yerby award and lecture honors the late Alonzo Smythe Yerby MD, MPH, the first African American Associate Dean and Department Chairman at HSPH for his life long efforts to improve the life conditions of the poor.

Harold W. Neighbors, CRECH Associate Director for Research Training, was one of five recipients of the **2001 Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award** at the University of Michigan. Established in 1996, the award honors Dr. Harold Johnson, former Dean of the School of Social Work. It recognizes UM faculty members who have provided outstanding leadership in increasing racial and ethnic diversity on campus and fostered intellectually supportive environments for UM students and faculty of color.