



CONTACT: Prabhu Pongshe
703-918-4930
210-362-6370 X4655 (May 31-June 2)
703-615-2466 (cell)
Joe Sutherland, Burness Communications
301-652-1558

FOR RELEASE: June 1, 2006, 1:30 P.M. CST

Editor's Note: The following research will be released at the Society for Prevention Research (www.preventionresearch.org) annual meeting, May 31-June 2, 2006, Hyatt Regency, San Antonio, TX.

DESIGNING PREVENTION PROGRAMS TO SERVE HISPANIC/LATINO YOUTH

New research shows role of family and Hispanic subgroups influence drug use

By 2050, Latinos will make up nearly a quarter of the US population. Alcohol use and HIV/AIDS are among the leading causes of death among Hispanics. Hispanics are more likely to get drunk at an earlier age than non-Hispanic youth and African Americans. Although Hispanics represent 13% of the U.S. population, they also account for 19% of new HIV cases and 20% of AIDS cases. Hispanic youth are at increased risk of HIV infection because they have higher rates of drug use and unprotected sex than African American and non-Hispanic youth. Despite the heightened risk of Hispanic youth to engage in alcohol and drug use behaviors and contract HIV, there are few programs that have been developed and tested to prevent drug use and HIV in Hispanic youth. At the Society for Prevention Research (SPR) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, leading Hispanic research scientists will present three new research studies.

- **What can Hispanic/Latino youth teach prevention researchers?**
- **How well have existing culture-specific prevention programs worked?**
- **How can Hispanic teens be subcategorized to best predict their risk of engaging in substance abuse or unprotected sex?**

Researchers from the University of Florida will provide an overview of research on alcohol, substance use and HIV prevention among Latino youth by focusing on some of the challenges in developing preventive interventions for this population.

Researchers from The Pennsylvania State University will describe a project that started out by asking Hispanic youth to describe what happens when their peers offer them drugs and alcohol – and how they can best refuse these offers. The end result was a culturally-grounded, video-based program that teaches risk assessment, decision making, and four resistance strategies. Guidelines for the successful cultural adaptation of a prevention program will be described. Results of one study indicate that the multicultural version of the prevention program was effective in limiting increases in substance use among Mexican Americans.

Researchers from the University of Miami tested several intervention programs aimed at Hispanic/Latino communities. They will share what they learned about effective program combinations and the community factors that appear to influence their success. Results indicate that a family intervention that promotes parenting skills and increases communication may be most effective in reducing risks for HIV.

A third study shows that not all Hispanic youth are the same, and that some interventions may work for some Hispanic youth while others may not be as effective. Researchers from Florida International University examined the impact of interventions designed to prevent substance abuse and early sex. Results suggest that the effectiveness of the interventions vary depending on the type of adolescent subgroup.

Researchers from Arizona State University will discuss the role of culture and cultural factors in prevention research with adolescents. They will review the highlights of each presentation and discuss various issues, challenges and theoretical implications involved in the design, adaptation, evaluation and refinement of prevention intervention to better serve the need of various sub-populations of Hispanics.

The SPR Annual Meeting will bring together scientists, practitioners, advocates and policy makers working to prevent social, physical and mental health problems. The meeting is being held May 31st through June 2nd in San Antonio Texas at the Hyatt Regency Hotel at 123 Losoya Street.

Sources: Mildred M Maldonado-Molina Ph.D., University of Florida; Felipe Castro Ph.D., Arizona State University; Michael Hecht Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University; Barbara Lopez Ph.D., University of Miami; Guillermo Prado Ph.D., Florida International University.