



STL Connection

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Improving Participation in Tissue Research among African-American Men

The Prostate Cancer Community Partnership (PCCP) focuses on identifying community outreach strategies to help reduce disparities in prostate cancer. Due to the racial disparities in prostate cancer, as well as the increased focus on the use of tissue research in the scientific community to better understand the causes of prostate cancer, the PCCP identified, as a priority, participation in tissue research among African-American men. Through the Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD), the group received funds from the National Cancer Institute to conduct focus groups to study the barriers to improved participation in tissue research among African-American men and to create strategies that address those barriers.

African-American men between the ages of 40 and 80 were recruited from the St. Louis metropolitan area with the help of our community partnerships. Each focus

group included three to eight men who were encouraged to discuss their knowledge, experience and opinions about health research, tissue research, and prostate



cancer-related tissue research.

In addition, discussion topics included strategies to improve participation in tissue research as well as the men's thoughts on how beneficial tissue research and good health are to improving cancer diagnosis and treatment outcomes.

To hear the voices of men across socioeconomic statuses, we recruited an approximately equal

number of men with more than a high school education and men with a high school education or less. Likewise, we recruited approximately equal number of prostate cancer survivors and men who have never been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Because the focus of the PCCP is addressing prostate cancer disparities by improving participation in tissue research, it was important to

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A National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center



Missouri Black Expo Prostate Cancer Walk Celebrates Another Successful Year

As one member of the Prostate Walk Committee so eloquently put it, “How can we save our men, if we don’t educate them on the importance of prostate cancer?”

On Saturday, August 20, members of the 100 Black Men of Metropolitan St. Louis in partnership with the Missouri Black Expo and members of the PECaD Prostate Cancer Community Partnership set out once again to meet this call to action.

Given the high incidence of prostate cancer among African-American men, it is befitting that the local chapter of the 100 Black Men would work with area universities, medical research centers, public health advocates, and health centers to raise awareness of this devastating disease. This year marked the ninth year of the Prostate Cancer Walk in the area and, by all accounts, this event was again a success. There were over 1200 registrants for the walk and the honorary co-chair was

D’Marco Farr, former St. Louis Ram’s Player and sports commentator for 101 ESPN Radio. During the pre-walk activities, there was a recognition of team captains and walk sponsors, and awards were presented to the largest teams and to area churches who registered individuals. Walkers were also prepped with a pre-walk workout and stretching exercises. On the two-mile trek that began at Kiener Plaza and ended at the America’s Center, supporters, family members, and friends walked through downtown creating a sea of blue and white, with area prostate cancer survivors leading the way. Upon arriving at the America’s Center, walkers were directed to a very unique prostate cancer education event.

At the event, walkers met area health advocates and physicians, and learned more about prostate cancer. Set in a staged beauty salon/barbershop, select speakers, including area urologists, public health researchers, community health advocates and survivors

participated in a semi-theatrical presentation focused on prostate cancer. The “cast” acted out interactions and conversations about prostate cancer that might occur in salons and barbershops everywhere. Using scripted prompts, impromptu acting, and occasionally even comedy, the cast educated the audience members on the prostate (what it is and what it’s not), issues related to prostate cancer screening, treatment options, and how the disease impacts families. They used the platform to dispel myths and misconceptions, and to highlight medical facts and advances in research. Audience members had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with health professionals from both Siteman Cancer Center and St. Louis University Cancer Center.

The day, consisting of the 100 Black Men Prostate Cancer Walk at the Missouri Black Expo, the prostate cancer education event, and PSA blood screening, was sponsored by the Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis University Cancer Center, St. Louis University Hospital, State Farm Insurance, 101 ESPN Radio, Fox 2 KTVI News, KPLR News 11, US Bank, Schnuck’s, Walmart, Sportsprint, Allied Insurance, Edward Jones, Set the PACE, and Prostate Conditions Education Council (PCEC).



Discussion Panel at MBE

PECaD Welcomes New Staff

Venera Bekteshi, PhD, MSW, MPA,



joined the PECaD program as a Postdoctorate Research Associate in June 2012. Dr. Bekteshi has experience in

community involvement, public policy, administration and research. Prior to coming to Washington University in St. Louis, she served as a Deputy Director of the Albanian American Women's Organization in New York, Deputy Director at New York City Department of Youth and Community Development's Beacons After School Program, Program Manager at the New York City Department of Homeless Services' Homeless Prevention Program, and Administration Coordinator at Aon Re Inc. She has participated in Ethical Leadership Training at The Woodhull Institute, Leadership Middle Management Training at the Institute for Not-for-Profit Management at Columbia University, and training in International Popular Economics at the Center for Popular Economics. Her articles on immigrant women's experiences with acculturation have appeared in various academic journals. Dr. Bekteshi has presented widely in numerous international and national, academic and non-academic conferences and community gatherings.

Meera Muthukrishnan, MPH, joined



PECaD in June 2011 as a Research Assistant. She recently graduated from Saint Louis University with her Master's

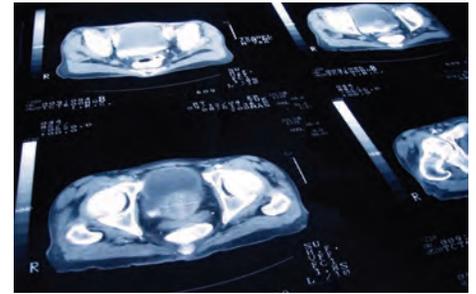
in Public Health with an emphasis in Epidemiology. She is primarily working on the colorectal cancer study, focused on increasing screening in community health centers. This project is led by Dr. Aimee James, Assistant Professor in the Division of Public Health Sciences of the Department of Surgery, WUSM.

Gloria Brand, MS joined PECaD



as the Project Coordinator for our Komen for the Cure® national project, based in North City, St. Louis. This

project is being led by Drs. Sarah Gehlert and Graham Colditz. Gloria has worked with health disparities for several years, with her most recent position being the Director of Cultural Health Initiatives for the American Heart Association in St. Louis. She is a Chicago native and received her Masters of Science in Public Administration from DePaul University in 2005.



Improving Participation

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understand barriers and to create strategies to improve participation from survivors and men without a prostate cancer history.

Fifteen focus groups, comprised of 65 men, have been conducted. The average age was 57 years old. Most were employed at least part-time (46%), had some college education (66%), were married (58%), and were insured, either with private insurance (62%) or state subsidy (25%). Twenty-eight percent had participated in a health research study and eight percent in a tissue research study. Qualitative analysis is currently in progress. Preliminary results show a common cautious willingness to participate in tissue research. Many men stated they would be more likely to participate if taking part in health studies would "help someone down the line," however there was hesitancy if the procedure was painful or invasive. Endorsement by physician or family members increased the men's willingness to participate.

Study team members include: Bettina F. Drake, PhD (project leader), Kimberly Carter, PhD (research assistant), Michael Johnson (focus group facilitator), Vetta Sanders-Thompson, PhD (mentor), Sarah Gehlert, PhD (mentor), and members of the PCCP.

Engaging Community Through Photovoice

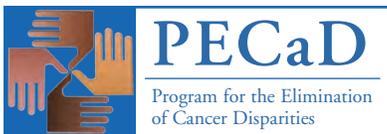
One priority identified by our Colorectal Cancer Community Partnership (CCCP) was the need to hear and understand the voices of patients regarding colon cancer screening and survival. We know that colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death and can be detected early, and even prevented, through regular screening. However many people are not screened, and those who are medically underserved are even less likely to undergo screening. Through many discussions, PECaD came up with a project that would help us hear these stories and study how we might integrate them into PECaD's research and outreach efforts to promote screening and reduce disparities. Researchers and our community partners worked closely together to refine the study idea, and after multiple rounds of review at the National Institutes of

Health (NIH), we were awarded a highly competitive, two-year grant to implement our Photovoice project.

Photovoice is a strategy that engages community members and stakeholders and promotes dialogue about social health topics. In this case, we will explore colon cancer screening. We will work with participants to select "themes" that they want to focus on, then we will provide them with cameras and ask them to go out and take photographs from their own perspective and context that relate to those themes. As the process continues, participants develop narratives about their images, and engage in facilitated dialogue with other project participants about the meaning of the pictures. Finally, participants will select the photographs that they feel are most meaningful and these ideas will be presented and shared with

stakeholders, policy makers, and other community members. The goal is to stimulate dialogue – and, ultimately change.

PECaD will conduct Photovoice groups with community members who have had colon cancer and with those who have been screened and do not have cancer. Photography expertise is not required; we will provide the necessary training and information, and will work with participants to help them succeed in finding their own voice. We think this is an exciting and new way to strengthen our ties and engage a variety of community members in our efforts. Recruitment begins this fall, so keep an eye out for updates on our progress! Contact Aimee James (jamesai@wudosis.wustl.edu) if you are interested or want more information.



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