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Georgia Southern Examines Cervical Screening Interventions for Rural Latina Immigrant Women

December 18, 2017



Dr. Juan S. Luque, Department of Public Health Sciences and Hollings Cancer Center, Medical University of South Carolina, led a study co-authored by Drs. Yelena Tarasenko and Moya L. Alfonso, Jiann Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University that examined the feasibility and efficacy of *Salud es Vida*-a promotora-led, Spanish language educational group session on cervical cancer screening (Pap tests)-self-efficacy (belief in ability to schedule and complete a Pap test), and knowledge among immigrant Hispanic/Latina women from farmworker backgrounds. These women are disproportionately burdened with cervical cancer, with mortality rates significantly higher than non-Hispanic whites.

The two-arm, quasi-experimental study was conducted in four rural counties of Southeast Georgia in 2014-2015. Hispanic/Latina immigrant women aged 21-65 years and overdue for a Pap test were included as intervention (N = 38) and control (N = 52) group participants. The intervention was developed in partnership with a group of promotoras to create the toolkit of materials which includes a curriculum guide, a brochure, a flipchart, a short animated video, and in-class activities. Twelve (32 %) intervention group participants received the Pap test compared to 10 (19 %) control group participants ($p = 0.178$). The intervention group scored significantly higher on both cervical cancer knowledge recall and retention than the control group ($p < 0.001$). While there was no statistically significant difference in cervical cancer screening self-efficacy scores between the group participants, both groups scored higher at follow-up, adjusting for the baseline scores. The group intervention approach was associated with increased cervical cancer knowledge but not uptake of Pap test.

More intensive interventions using patient navigation approaches or promotoras who actively follow participants or conducting one-on-one rather than group sessions may be needed to achieve improved screening outcomes with this population.

“[Salud es Vida: a Cervical Cancer Screening Intervention for Rural Latina Immigrant Women](#),” was recently published in the *Journal for Cancer Education*.

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