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Georgia Southern Examines Social Network Characteristics

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Peru has high cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates compared to other Andean countries. Therefore, partnerships between governmental and international organizations have targeted rural areas of Peru to receive cervical cancer screening via outreach campaigns. Previous studies have found a relationship between a person’s social networks and cancer screening behaviors. Screening outreach campaigns conducted by the nonprofit organization CerviCusco created an opportunity for a social network study to examine cervical cancer screening history and social network characteristics in a rural indigenous community that participated in these campaigns in 2012 and 2013. The aim of this study was to explore social network characteristics in this community related to receipt of cervical cancer screening following the campaigns.

An egocentric social network questionnaire was used to collect cross-sectional network data on community participants. Each survey participant (ego) was asked to name six other women they knew (alters) and identify the nature of their relationship or tie (family, friend, neighbor, other), residential closeness (within 5 km), length of time known, frequency of communication, topics of conversation, and whether they lent money to the person, provided childcare or helped with transportation. In addition, each participant was asked to report the nature of the relationship between all alters identified (e.g., friend, family, or neighbor). Bivariate and multivariate analyses were used to explore the relationship between Pap test receipt at the CerviCusco outreach screening campaigns and social network characteristics.

According to this exploratory study, female neighbors more than family members may have provided an important source of social support for healthcare related decisions related to receipt of a Pap test. Future studies should collect longitudinal social network data on participants to measure the network effects of screening interventions in rural indigenous communities in Latin American countries experiencing the highest burden of cervical cancer.

“Social network characteristics and cervical cancer screening among Quechua women in Andean Peru,” was published in BMC Public Health.

Dr. Juan Luque, associate professor at the Department of Public Health Sciences and Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston was the lead author and Dr. Samuel Opoku, assistant professor of health policy and management at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was one of the co-authors.
Georgia Southern Estimates for Cell Counts and Common Odds Ratio

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Missing observations often occur in cross-classified data collected during observational, clinical, and public health studies. Inappropriate treatment of missing data can reduce statistical power and give biased results.

The work done by Georgia Southern faculty extends the Baker, Rosenberger and Dersimonian modeling approach to compute maximum likelihood estimates for cell counts in three-way tables with missing data, and studies the association between two dichotomous variables while controlling for a third variable in $2 \times 2 \times K$ tables. This approach is applied to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data. Simulation studies are used to investigate the efficiency of estimation of the common odds ratio.

“Estimates for cell counts and common odds ratio in three-way contingency tables by homogeneous log-linear models with missing data,” was published in

Dr. Haresch Rochani, assistant professor of biostatistics, Dr. Robert Vogel, dual department chair for biostatistics and epidemiology, Dr. Hani Samawi, professor of biostatistics, at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University were the authors for this study.