

# Improving Satisfaction and Health Behavior Outcomes Among African-American Patients

Studying culturally sensitive patient-centered health care assessments and the effects of a promotional training model

### **SUMMARY**

The Institute of Medicine has identified patient-centered care as an important dimension of health care quality. Patient-centered, "culturally sensitive" health care addresses patients' cultural preferences and tailors care to the patient's cultural needs. While culturally sensitive health care may help reduce racial and ethnic disparities, there is little empirical evidence of a link between such care and improved patient health.

During 2007–09 researchers at the University of Florida conducted a two-phase study designed to address health care disparities both through the development and testing of culturally sensitive assessment tools (phase one) and through a health promotion model program (phase two).

In the first phase, the researchers administered the Tucker-Culturally Sensitive Health Care Inventory (which was designed by the research team) and other assessment measures at 67 health care sites nationwide. Those assessed included 1,696 patients, 493 office staff members and 74 providers.

Researchers also administered a Health Care Site Characteristics Questionnaire to 67 site administrators.

In the second phase, the researchers tested the effectiveness of a Patient-Centered Culturally Sensitive Health Care and Health Promoting Model Program on the health status of patients with type 2 diabetes. The program consisted of two five-hour workshops that focused on healthy eating and exercise.

The researchers recruited 130 patients, mostly Black, divided into intervention and control groups. The assessment tools used in phase one also were used in the second phase. In addition, patients were asked about their blood glucose levels, depression, physical stress and general well-being.

Researchers also recorded the patients' height, weight and blood pressure.

# **Key Findings**

Project Director Carolyn M. Tucker, Ph.D., reported the following findings to RWJF:

- The higher the percentage of racially and ethnically diverse staff members employed at a health care facility, the more satisfaction patients reported about their care. The patients surveyed in phase one of the project who utilized more diverse clinics gave higher ratings to:
  - Their control over their own health care.
  - The amount of information shared with them by their providers.
  - Satisfaction with their provider.
  - The cultural sensitivity of the site's environment and policies.
- Participants in the model program workshops on healthy behavior experienced significant positive health outcomes and other changes, while control group patients did not. Patients in the intervention group had significant decreases in:
  - Body mass index.
  - Diastolic blood pressure.
  - Physical stress.

The intervention group also reported significant positive changes in:

- Sleeping.
- Exercising regularly.
- Reading nutrition labels.
- Limiting consumption of foods high in fat and sodium.
- Use of anger management skills.
- Consumption of whole grains.

## **Funding**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) supported this project with a grant of \$236,183 between April 2007 and August 2009 to the University of Florida Foundation.

### **Afterward**

As of March 2010, researchers were preparing four articles for submission to peer-reviewed journals for publication.

The research team was pursuing several related projects at the end of the grant period:

- With a one-year grant (through May 2010) of \$100,000 from the Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, they implemented part of the model program at 15 African-American churches. The project is aimed at women who are overweight or have hypertension.
- The researchers were using the clinical tool version of the Tucker-Culturally Sensitive Health Care Inventory in a study involving medical students in primary care training at the University of Florida College of Medicine. The goal of the study is to better prepare students to be culturally sensitive providers.
- They also were studying whether use of the model program encourages greater health promotion efforts on the part of clinic staff. Seven medical clinics at the University of Florida are the subjects of this study.

Prepared by: Mary B. Geisz

Reviewed by: Robert Narus and Molly McKaughan

Program Officer: Claire B. Gibbons

Grant ID # 059281

Program area: Quality/Equality

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

(Current as of date of the report; as provided by the grantee organization; not verified by RWJF; items not available from RWJF.)

## **Book Chapters**

Tucker CM, Daly K and Herman KC. "Customized Multicultural Health Counseling: Bridging the Gap between Mental and Physical Health for Racial and Ethnic Minorities." In *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling* (3rd ed), Ponterotto JG, Casas JM, Suzuki LA and Alexander CM (eds). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010.

#### **Articles**

Jones JD and Tucker CM. "Testing of a Patient-Centered Culturally Sensitive Health Care Model for Understanding Treatment Adherence Among a National Sample of Hispanic Patients." Unpublished, 2009.

Jones JD, Tucker CM, Hoover EL and Curry RW. "The Relationships among Trust in Physician, Control in the Decision-making Process, and General Treatment Adherence Among A National Sample of African American Patients and Non-Hispanic White American Patients." Unpublished, 2009.

Tucker CM, Daly KD, Marsiske M, Pyle LM, Thomas BT and Hoover EL. "A Community Participatory Health Promotion Intervention Series for Adults with Type 2 Diabetes." Unpublished, 2009.

Tucker CM, Lopez MT, Marsiske M and Herman KC. "Effects of a Patient-Centered Culturally Sensitive Health Care and Health Promotion Model Program on the Physical and Psychological Health of Patients with Type 2 Diabetes." Unpublished, 2009.

## **Reports**

Carolyn M. Tucker. Use of Culturally Sensitive Health Care Assessments and Patient Health and Health Care Promotion Training to Address Disparities Research Questions Related to Quality of Care Experienced by Culturally Diverse Patients: An Interim Project Report.

#### **Grantee Websites**

www.psych.ufl.edu/~tucker/BMED/BMED%20project.htm (no longer available). Web site created to facilitate public access to information regarding the project. Gainesville, FL: Behavioral Medicine Research Team of the University of Florida Psychology Department.