

Connecting with Farmworkers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Using Research to Elevate Their Voices

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify the five steps of the research process
2. Describe strategies to support community engaged research
3. Recall two lessons learned for helping researchers, farmworkers and community partners promote health equity, collaborate effectively, and actively engage in the research process

Engaging and Connecting

- ▶ Each of you has knowledge, experiences and expertise! We want this presentation will be **interactive** and learn from each other.
- ▶ We encourage use of the **chat feature** and will monitor it during the session.
- ▶ We will also use the **polling feature** throughout the session.
- ▶ You can also be involved in research today! Please see the chat box for links to a **5-minute survey in English and Spanish** about attendees' views and needs related to research information and training.



Polling

Getting to know
each other

Research: What, Why and How?

- ▶ **What?** Research is defined as “a careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it.” (Oxford Dictionary)
- ▶ **Why?** The results from research can help us make decisions - at the policy, organizational, and individual levels.
- ▶ **How:** It is important to think about who is involved in choosing the topics to research and the questions asked and to find out when different people are involved and in what way(s).

Comparative Effectiveness Research



- ▶ One type of research that produces results that can help patients make decisions is called Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER).
- ▶ “CER studies compare outcomes, including risks and benefits, of two or more approaches to healthcare”
 - <https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/PCORI-Research-Fundamentals-Approach-PCOR.pdf> (slide 13)
- ▶ CER results can be particularly helpful at the individual level, when a person may be faced with two or more options for a particular healthcare decision.

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research

- ▶ Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) is a type of Comparative Effectiveness Research that focuses on outcomes that are important to patients and others who support them, like their families and healthcare teams.
- ▶ For example:
 - A doctor may be interested in understanding which of 2 or 3 medications will help most patients move lab values back into the normal range for a specific disease.
 - The patient may be interested in which of those medications will help them return to work and at a cost that is most affordable.
- ▶ CER can help answer those questions. Both are important, yet the outcomes that are important to patients are not always included in research. PCOR helps patient perspective be a part of the study.

Stages of the Research Process

Here are five stages of research. Patients, those who work with them, and other stakeholders can and should be involved in all stages!



1. Choose topic to study



2. Design the study



3. Collect the data or information



4. Analyze and understand the information



5. Share the results

Strategies during COVID-19

- ▶ Today, we will share three examples of research done on the topic of farmworkers and COVID-19:
 - ❑ Using In-person surveys to explore farmworkers' views and needs related to COVID-19
 - ❑ Using Apps to study Social Determinants of Health
 - ❑ Using Social Media to share preventive health practices during COVID with Latino immigrant cattle feedyard workers

1. In-person survey work

What We Did

- ▶ We administered an in-person survey asking farmworkers about COVID-19.
- ▶ Offered in English or Spanish, a researcher or a trained community provider read the questions and recorded their answers.
- ▶ A strict IRB-approved safety protocol was followed involving masks, hand sanitizer and social distancing in outdoor spaces.
- ▶ Questions included topics such as:
 - If they had received information on various COVID-19 topics
 - Topics where farmworkers need more information
 - Where they get information about COVID-19 and what source(s) they trust
 - How it has affected their lives
- Farmworkers were paid \$20 for participating in the 15 to 20 minute survey.



In-person Survey Work

Strategies for Community Engaged Research

- ▶ Involve farmworkers early and throughout the process; for example, helping to identify questions to ask
- ▶ Have community partners, farmworkers and researcher talk about where and when to offer the survey, so it is accessible and in a safe environment
- ▶ Take time to think through the safety protocols and tailor them to your environment (e.g., rural realities)
- ▶ Involve people the farmworkers know and trust and remember that the research process may be a new experience

In-person Survey Work

What We Learned

- Farmworkers wanted to be involved in the research and have their opinions heard. They are proud of their involvement!
- Farmworkers have ideas on other important questions about COVID-19 still in need of study and information they want and need.
- Word spreads among workers about whether it is worth the time to participate in the research activity.
- Some farmworkers may not have participated in research before. Balance the amount of time it takes for them to participate with having some time to connect on a personal level.
- Think about your audience and location. Workers in rural areas may not have reliable internet and/or cellular data and voice service. Those who do may have a limited, pay-per-gigabyte data plan.

Polling

Factors outside of the clinic account for what % of a patient's health?

-35%

-50%

-75%

-80%

2. HoLA for COVID-19

Community Trust & Social Determinants of Healths

Background

- ▶ Household Level Assessment (HoLA) launched at the Department of Population Health-Dell Medical School-University of Texas in Austin
- ▶ Multiple Focus Groups, constant IRB adjustments, multiple stakeholder feedback- including Community Strategy Team
- ▶ Goal was to learn about factors affecting a person/family's health outside of the clinic
- ▶ Between 45-60 minutes via RedCap using a tablet in people's home
- ▶ \$25 Compensation
- ▶ Scheduled to the person/family's convenience
- ▶ Follow-up involved referral to services
- ▶ Relationship building and geographic commitment

The Details

- ▶ Community Health Workers (lived-in experience) performed the assessment
- ▶ Survey provided in English and Spanish
- ▶ Snowball sampling
- ▶ Tested sequence of questions
- ▶ Christmas Cards sent
- ▶ Community Leaders informed and recruited
- ▶ Long term commitment
- ▶ Solution-based questions
- ▶ More of a conversation vs interrogation

HoLA 2.0 (Central Texas Check-In)

- ▶ Covid-19 changes the world
- ▶ Contact Tracing takes center stage
- ▶ Communities are scared, confused
- ▶ Needs increase and referrals become more important than ever
- ▶ 4 FTS, 3 Interns, and 9 Volunteers
- ▶ 71 Variables (headers, questions, skip patterns, information and resources)
- ▶ 4 sections with a total of 43 questions
- ▶ Follow-up optional
- ▶ Incentive (raffle) for participation

Central Texas Check In Summary

- ▶ Open in August 21-Sept 21
- ▶ Available in English and Spanish
- ▶ 486 Travis County Residents / 294 requested follow-up
- ▶ Age (Mean 47, median 44), 13% 65 or older, Range 20-96
- ▶ Race/Ethnicity (46% Hispanic/Latinx, 42% White, 13% Black, 3% Asian, 1% American Indian, 1% Middle Eastern, 1% Other)
- ▶ Language preferred (or the language spoken at home) 71.3% English, 28.2% Spanish
- ▶ Top Needs: 27% Cash Assistance, 27% Food, 25% PPE
- ▶ Jobs: 28.2% Hours reduced, 17.6% lost their job, 5.8% temporarily laid off
- ▶ 8.4 Someone in household tested positive for COVID-19
- ▶ Rent/Mortgage: 15.6% late payments, 16.3% missed payments, 9.4% partial payment, 54.4 full payment, 3.1% did not apply

Where we are now

- Survey period October 19-December 7th
- 767 Survey completed
- 442 Permission to follow-up
- 426 expressed at least one need
- Data Cleaning and Analysis, hopefully finishing Spring 2021
- Survey translation to multiple languages (Aiming for 300+ Surveys)
- Continuous check-ins with participants

Lessons for Research

- Listen to the community needs-adapt quickly and let people most affected guide and design
- If you ask a question about a need, offer a solution
- Commit long-term, build horizontal relationships
- Consider multiple languages, different channels to reach people (tech, culture, location, agents)
- Compensate participants, in the same way a researcher collects data, a participant provides data. Design compensation on the front end.
- Focus on research that will be used by the community it touched, have folks that participated expand and own it.

Polling

Learning from you...

3. Using Social Media

- ▶ Most farmworkers have cell phones and many use social media platforms like Facebook.
- ▶ Social media can be an effective method for sharing health and safety information.
 - ▶ Research to Practice (r2p) is an approach to promote the use, adoption, and adaptation of knowledge, interventions, and technologies.

3. Using Social Media

- ▶ Developed 2 bilingual infographics related to COVID-19: (1) workplace preventive strategies and (2) mental health promotion strategies
- ▶ Posted on Facebook and used boosted posts

	Total reach	Engagements
Workplace preventive strategies	41,700	3,200
Mental health promotion strategies	23,000	2,700
TOTAL	64,700	5,900



- ▶ Social media can be a cost-effective method for outreach to farmworkers.
- ▶ Virtual outreach can extend and supplement traditional outreach strategies.

Discussion

- ▶ What ideas do you have for how to involve farmworkers throughout the research process?
- ▶ What strategies, supports or information helps farmworkers, community partners and researchers collaborate more effectively on research projects?

Additional Resources

- ▶ Migrant Clinicians Network Institutional Review Board

<https://www.migrantclinician.org/services/research/institutional-review-board.html>

- ▶ Networking Resource Information <https://socwel.ku.edu/highlight-migrant>

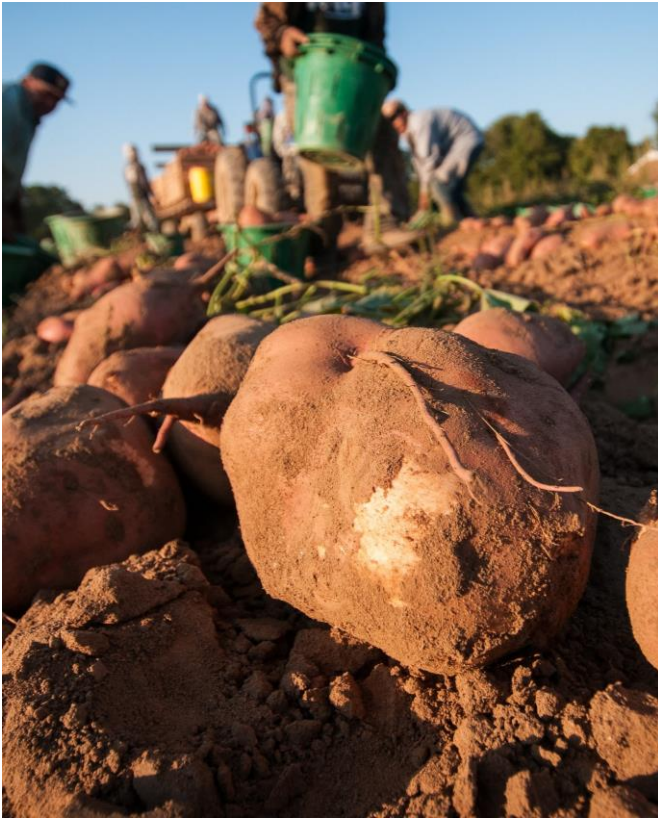
- ▶ PCORI Research Fundamentals <https://www.pcori.org/engagement/research-fundamentals>

- ▶ Farmworker Survey on COVID-19 <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/2019/migratory-and-seasonal-agricultural-workers-and-health-research-developing>

- ▶ Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health <https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/cscash/>

- ▶ U.S. Ag Centers YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/USagCenters/>

Thank you!



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