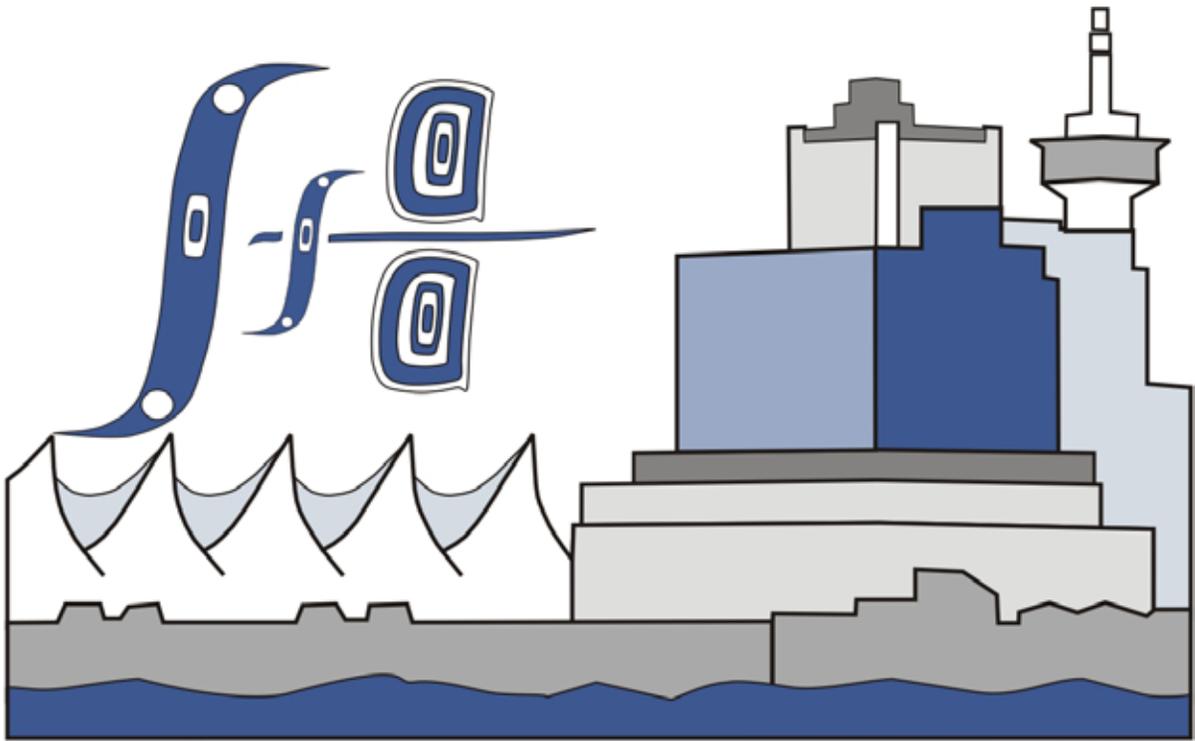


*Join us for the 66th Annual Meeting of the
Society for Applied Anthropology
Hyatt Regency Vancouver
March 28 - April 2, 2006*



**WORLD ON THE EDGE
VANCOUVER, BC 2006**

Co-Sponsoring Organizations:

Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA)

Political Ecology Society (PESO)

Council on Nursing and Anthropology (CONAA)

Society for Applied Anthropology / Society for Medical Anthropology Annual Meeting

Session: Aging Adults, Maturing Methods? Multidisciplinary Health Research in Elder Populations

Timeslot: Thursday, March 30, 2006, 10:10 – 11:50 a.m.

Organizer: Namino Glantz

Session abstract:

By 2050, adults aged 60 and over will increase from 1 in 10 people, to 1 in 5, driving elder health to the top of research and intervention agendas. In response, this multidisciplinary session will explore elder health research strategies and findings in five cultural contexts. Further, we reflect on methodological and ethical questions, such as: Are established qualitative health research methods relevant, ethical and valid when applied to the aged? How can researchers best access and represent elders' lived experiences? Ultimately, can we engage and empower older adults and the healthcare community through our research?

Discussants:

Nancy E. Schoenberg, Ph.D.

University of Kentucky

Papers:

Chad Witcher, MA

PhD student

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

University of Alberta, Edmonton, CANADA

Perceptions of Physical Activity among Older Adults in Rural Newfoundland

Older adults in Newfoundland (NL) are less physically active than the Canadian average. This study explores perceptions of being physically active and the nature of physical activity participation among older adults in the cultural context of rural NL. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 participants (\bar{X} = 82 yrs; R = 70-94). Participants' involvement in work activity during youth, as well as their perceptions of community norms related to work activity, leisure activity, and age-appropriate activity was found to contribute to participants' physical inactivity. The practical implications for the promotion of physical activity in rural NL will be discussed.

J. Neil Henderson, Ph.D., & L. Carson Henderson, Ph.D., MPH

Department of Health Promotion Sciences, College of Public Health

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Alzheimer's Disease Beliefs among American Indians

Increasing longevity among American Indians (AI) places them at unprecedented risk for dementing diseases. Available medications make early detection crucial for optimal treatment. Sixty AI subjects were recruited into "caregivers" and "non-caregivers" and interviewed regarding explanatory models for dementia. This Oklahoma sample represented southeastern and plains culture regions. Findings among caregivers were 1) stress causes dementia, 2) physicians are unimportant to diagnosis/treatment, 3) allied health disciplines and family are the main responders, and 4) hallucinatory symptoms are communications with the "other side" preparatory to death. Non-caregivers' findings indicated a knowledge vacuum. Findings did not vary by regional culture groupings.

C. Nicole Freyberg

Researcher, University of Alberta

Alexander Clark, PhD

Assistant Professor, University of Alberta

The Conceptual Coulee: Heart failure, Hermeneutic Dissonance, and Experiences of Care Between Elders and Their Providers in Rural Alberta

Many people diagnosed with congestive heart failure remain unaware of the meaning and implications of their condition. Through a critical-realist paradigm, in-depth interviews with patients and their informal caregivers explore the subjective experience of heart failure among elders in rural Alberta.

Health care providers' ethical and moral perceptions are also explored to illuminate discordance between provider intention and patient understanding. Specific areas of inquiry, including notions surrounding physician trust, prairie and farming culture, the local political and economic climate, and social capital inform the meaning and implications of congestive heart failure in a population situated geographically and medically "on the edge."

Laura Talarsky Stevens

PhD student

Department of Anthropology

University of Arizona

Success for Whom? Life on the Ground for Elders within the "Kerala Model"

Kerala State, India has all the right numbers when it comes to the health indicators: high life expectancy, low infant and child mortality, and low fertility rates. Yet, its health transition has also created an aging population and one of the highest levels of morbidity in India – referred to as "the failure of success".

Yet, what lies beneath the statistics on "success" and "failure" and the discourses that surround them?

Through an anthropological study of elders in Kerala, this paper examines the role of ethnography in illuminating on-the-ground realities to what the numbers say, and more significantly, what they don't.

Namino M. Glantz

PhD student

Department of Anthropology

University of Arizona

Jumpstarting community engagement around elder health: Formative research in Chiapas, Mexico

Formative research refers to a multi-stage participatory research process that is iterative and draws upon multiple methods and actors to develop community-congruent interventions. The process entails becoming informed about and informing community dialogue; identifying needs and resources; generating intervention options via critical assessment and problem solving; and monitoring process, outcome, and responses (Nichter 1990). I describe how formative research was used to initiate community dialogue about elder health needs in Chiapas, Mexico, spurring plans for health service reform. This case illustrates a form of "public anthropology" that employs participatory research to engage multiple stakeholders in local and health care communities.