



The Empowerer

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PROJECT EMPOWERMENT

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COMING SOON:

- Project Empowerment on Facebook

Editor: Allen Lewis, Ph.D.

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Welcome to the second issue of the THE EMPOWERER, the quarterly newsletter of Project Empowerment. Project Empowerment is a minority disability research project at Virginia Commonwealth University funded by a five-year National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) grant. The goal of the grant is to advance the state of the science in the conduct of minority disability research and to develop more persons who are passionate and interested in devoting careers to this line of research. Our goal with THE EMPOWERER is to continue to maintain transparency as it relates to the activities and processes on the grant.

We have been very busy during this last quarter with the Think Tank/Research Consortium meeting, preparing for an upcoming webcast entitled "Disability Disparities" as well as planning and implementing additional minority disability research.

Please visit the Project Empowerment website at www.vcu-projectempowerment.org. We invite you to participate in project activities. We also welcome your thoughts to help us strengthen and advance the goals of the grant.

Sincerely,

Allen Lewis, Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Counseling
School of Allied Health Professions, Virginia Commonwealth University

Spotlight on Minority Disability Scholarship

Upcoming Special Issue:

- Drs. Allen Lewis, PI and Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, Co-PI of Project Empowerment, have been invited to be guest co-editors for a special issue of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (JVR)* on "multicultural challenges in employment of people with disabilities." This special issue will be printed in early 2010 (February-March).

Journal articles:

- Gary KW, Arango-Lasprilla JC, Stevens LF. Do racial/ethnic differences exist in post-injury outcomes after TBI? A comprehensive review of the literature. *Brain Injury* Sept. 2009 23(10); 775-789.
- Gary, K.W., Arango-Lasprilla, J.C., Ketchum, J.M., Kreutzer, J.S., Copolillo, A., Novack, T., & Jha, A. (in press). Racial differences in employment outcome after traumatic brain injury at 1, 2, and 5 years post-injury. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.
- Lewis, A.N. (2009). Disability disparities: A beginning model. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 31(14), 1136-1143.

- Lewis, A.N., Bethea, J., & Hurley, J. (2009). Integrating cultural competency in rehabilitation curricula: Keeping it simple. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 31(14), 1161-1169.
- Lewis, A.N., Davis, K.E., & Zhang, N.I. (in press). Admissions of African Americans to state psychiatric hospitals. *International Journal of Public Policy* (special issue).

Book Chapters:

- Lewis, A., Shamburger, A. Three-factor Model of Multicultural Counseling for Consumers with Disabilities (in F. Balcazar, Y. Suarez-Balcazar, T. Taylor-Ritzler, & C. Keys, Eds.) *Race, culture and disability: Rehabilitation science and practice*. Jones and Bartlett: Boston, MA.

Conference presentations:

- National TBI Caregiver's Conference; June 6, 2009; Keynote Speaker: Kelli Williams Gary, Ph.D., MPH, OTR/L; "Overcoming Insurmountable Obstacles: Tips for a Happy and Productive Life Following Brain Injury". Williamsburg, VA.
- Drs. Allen Lewis and Kelli Gary presented on the first funding year of Project Empowerment at the NIDRR Section 21 Capacity Building Meeting, July 28, 2009, Washington, DC. Feedback was useful and included information and suggestions from other NIDRR grantees. Some suggestions to assist in grant management included expanding the project to collaborate with other NIDRR grantees with similar projects (i.e. Medical University of S. Carolina, Center on Health Outcomes Research and Capacity Building for Underserved Populations with SCI and TBI) and exploring other forms of media to inform interested parties about the grant such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Doval, E. Presented on Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities from a Hispanic Background in Transition from School to Work at the 61st Annual National Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (peer-reviewed presentation) (2009).
- Doval, E. presented on Supporting Students with Disabilities: Self-Determination in Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities from a Hispanic Background at the 13th Annual Holmes Partnership National Conference (peer-reviewed presentation) (2009).
- Gary, K.W. Presented on Long-term Employment Outcomes among African Americans with TBI at the First Annual International Conference on Culture, Ethnicity and Brain Injury (invited concurrent session presentation) (2009).
- Lewis, A. Poster presentation on Project Empowerment: Improving Capacity to Conduct Culturally Competent Minority Disability Research – The National Survey on Current Status of Research and Service Practices with Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations at the National Council of Rehabilitation Education Annual Conference (peer reviewed poster presentation) (2009).
- Lewis, A. Presented on Disability Disparities: A Beginning Model at the National Council of Rehabilitation Education Annual Conference (peer-reviewed presentation) (2009).
- Lewis, A. Presented on NIDRR DRRP Grant (#H133A080060) - Project Empowerment: Improving Minority Disability Research Capacity at the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation-Neuropsychology Grand Rounds (invited presentation) (2009).
- Lewis, A. Presented on Rehabilitation Services to African Americans with Brain Injury at the First Annual International Conference on Culture, Ethnicity and Brain Injury (invited plenary session presentation) (2009).
- Lewis, A. Presented on Teaching Cultural Competency in the 21st Century at the First Annual International Conference on Culture, Ethnicity and Brain Injury (invited concurrent session presentation) (2009).

Update on Research Studies

Study 1 -- A national survey examining the experiences of Americans with disabilities from racial and ethnic minority groups to illuminate the current capacity of the rehabilitation and disability system, and to learn what research methods and dissemination practices are needed to advance the field in culturally competent research.

- A very rough initial draft of the national survey has been disseminated for the first round of feedback from targeted members of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education and Project Empowerment stakeholders.
- The initial draft of the national survey was critically reviewed and modifications suggested at the Project Empowerment Think Tank/Research Consortium on August 7, 2009.
- Drs. Gary, Doval, and Crockett along with Aisha Shamburger are currently working on a comprehensive literature review on the experiences of minorities with disabilities in the rehabilitation and disability services system AND minority disability research methods and dissemination practices.

Study 2 -- A longitudinal study examining post-injury unemployment for racial and ethnic minority persons with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries (TBI/SCI).

- This study has been completed.

Study 3 -- A study examining prevalence and trends in employment discrimination due to disability for different racial and/or ethnic minority groups.

- The VCU IRB application approved as of 5/4/09.
- The timeline for study implementation is under revision.

One of the the exciting things about the implementation of studies 1 and 3 is that we will utilize a participatory action model to conduct the research, relying heavily on the active involvement and voices of both our minority institution partners (VUU, VSU, and NSU) as well as people with disabilities through the American Association of People with Disabilities in Washington, D.C. in all phases of the research.

Capacity Building Forum

The capacity building component of this project is very important. It represents a way to engage in succession planning by identifying individuals who can be developed to be ready, passionate and interested in devoting careers to the study of racial and ethnic minorities with disabilities. Our capacity building efforts are based primarily on collaboration with minority partner institutions (VUU, VSU, and NSU) as well as interested minority students identified at other universities. So far, we have done the following:

- Recruitment strategies to attract students at VUU, VSU, NSU, and other Hispanic serving institutions are being developed by Dr. Kelli Gary and Aisha Shamburger.
- On-campus presentations with minority institutional partners to reach potential student participants and faculty members have been scheduled to occur in the fall.
- Dr. Jenelle Pitt, one of the former minority doctoral students is now an Assistant Professor at California State University, Fresno. She continues to work on several collaborative publications with Dr. Lewis and Mimi Getachew (minority doctoral student) at the University of Iowa related to the culture of poverty and disabilities.

Training, Dissemination, and Knowledge Translation Center

Project Empowerment will deploy 13 strategies for training and dissemination. Each one is designed to promote minority disability knowledge system-wide. Together, they constitute a multi-pronged approach to ensure broad reach and maximum system penetration of knowledge generated by Project Empowerment. The strategies are:

- newsletter,
- listserv,
- website (www.vcu-projectempowerment.org),
- minority disability research training module in Blackboard (underway),
- grant writing training module in Blackboard (underway),
- annual web casts on minority disability topics,
- fact sheets on minority disability topics,
- conference presentations,
- published manuscripts,
- state of the science conference,
- handbook of minority research best practice, and
- Research to Action Notes.

■ The Research to Action Notes (RAN) strategy is a summary of the "lessons learned" from research that will apply to rehabilitation and disability practice. The journal article highlighted as a RAN next quarter will be: Lewis, A.N. (2009). Disability disparities: A beginning model. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 31(14), 1136-1143.

■ Research Day held on July 27, 2009 was a one-day training formulated to inform our minority institutional partners of the specific procedures and processes used to conduct Study 2 entitled, "Longitudinal Study of Unemployment for Individuals with TBI and SCI." Attendees included project staff members as well as an undergraduate student and an assistant professor from Norfolk State Univ., and the Assistant Director from the American Association of Persons with Disabilities. The most poignant idea that evolved from the sessions was to post information on the Project Empowerment website in an effort to inform partners in advance about ideas being

proposed for future studies and scholarship activities already in progress. This would allow participants to adjust their schedules and become involved earlier in proposed studies as well as those that are in early stages of being developed.

- On August 7, 2009, the first annual Think Tank/Research Consortium (one of the main strategies for building, promoting, and sustaining a community of practice of minority disability researchers) was held in Richmond, Virginia. Participants included lead project personnel, project staff, consultants, advisory board members, grant participant observers and additional project stakeholders. Outcomes generated from the Think Tank were:
 - Suggested strategies to encourage additional minority disability student and faculty researchers to become involved in the grant including representation from Latino and Asian-Pacific Islander populations.
 - More focused effort to reach out to future minority disability researchers through campus visits and Facebook.
 - Developing the upcoming State of the Science Conference possibly as a precursor conference to generate ideas for the subsequent 2010 National Council on Disability Conference that coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Suggestions for streamlining and improving the national survey for study 1 to effectively reach the various targeted populations.
- State of Science Conference: Date to be determined.
- Project Empowerment is coming to Facebook and will be accessible by November 1, 2009.

The website will have a link to direct individuals directly to the fan page. The goal of using this new forum is to inform individuals about the goals of the grant, upcoming webcasts and to introduce new individuals, especially undergraduate minority students, to the many positive possibilities when involved in minority disability research. We hope to increase project visibility by using Facebook.

- On October 21, 2009 at 3:00pm EST, Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, Ph.D. (Co-PI for Project Empowerment) and Kelli Williams Gary, Ph.D., MPH, OTR/L (Post-doctoral Fellow for Project Empowerment) will present a webcast entitled "Employment Outcomes after Traumatic Brain Injury: Does Race/Ethnicity Matter?" This webcast will be hosted by the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) and aims to examine the effect of race/ethnicity on employment outcomes following TBI.
- On November 20, 2009 at 2:00pm EST, Allen Lewis, Ph.D. (PI for Project Empowerment), Andrew Imparato, J.D. (CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities), Phil Rumrill, Ph.D. (Project Consultant from Kent State University), Reginald Alston, Ph.D. (Project Consultant from the University of Illinois - Urbana/Champaign), and Keith Wilson, Ph.D. (Project Consultant from Pennsylvania State University) will present a webcast entitled "Strategies toward the Elimination of Disability Disparities." This webcast will be a follow up to the webcast held earlier (September 23, 2009) titled "Disability Disparities."
- Project Empowerment has been invited to be one of the spotlights in the annual publication of the International Innovation Project (IIP) produced out of England. Each year, the IIP spotlights innovative grant projects from around the world. An article about Project Empowerment will appear in the next edition of the IIP magazine.

Project Empowerment Team -- Key Stakeholders

National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation Research -- Project Officer Delores Watkins, M.S.

Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kent State University ■ Norfolk State University ■ Penn State University ■ The American Association of People with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services ■ University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign ■ Virginia State University ■ Virginia Union University
Lead Project Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allen Lewis, Ph.D., principal investigator ■ Juan Carlos Aranga-Lasprilla, Ph.D., co-principal investigator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Paul Wehman, Ph.D., co-principal investigator ■ Jessica Ketchum, Ph.D., biostatistician
Project Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mike Barcus, M.S., project coordinator ■ Teri Blankenship, M.S., dissemination coordinator ■ Keith Caleb, B.A., fiscal staff ■ Satoko Crockatt, Ph.D., project evaluator ■ Douglas Erickson, M.S., coordinator of information technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kelli Gary, Ph.D., post doctoral fellow ■ Brian McMahon, Ph.D., research associate ■ Jeanne Roberts, coordinator of publication services ■ Aisha Shamburger, M.S., doctoral student/graduate assistant ■ Tricia Zeh, M.S., fiscal administrator
Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reginald Alston, Ph.D. ■ Andrew Imparato, J.D. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Philip Rumrill, Ph.D. ■ Keith Wilson, Ph.D.
Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cheryl Al-Mateen, M.D. ■ Jihad Aziz, Ph.D. ■ Faye Belgrave, Ph.D. ■ Sheryl Garland, M.P.A. ■ Michael Pyles, Ph.D. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ James Rothrock, M.S. ■ Shawn Utsey, Ph.D.