

Academia and Rural Communities: Partnerships to Foster Research

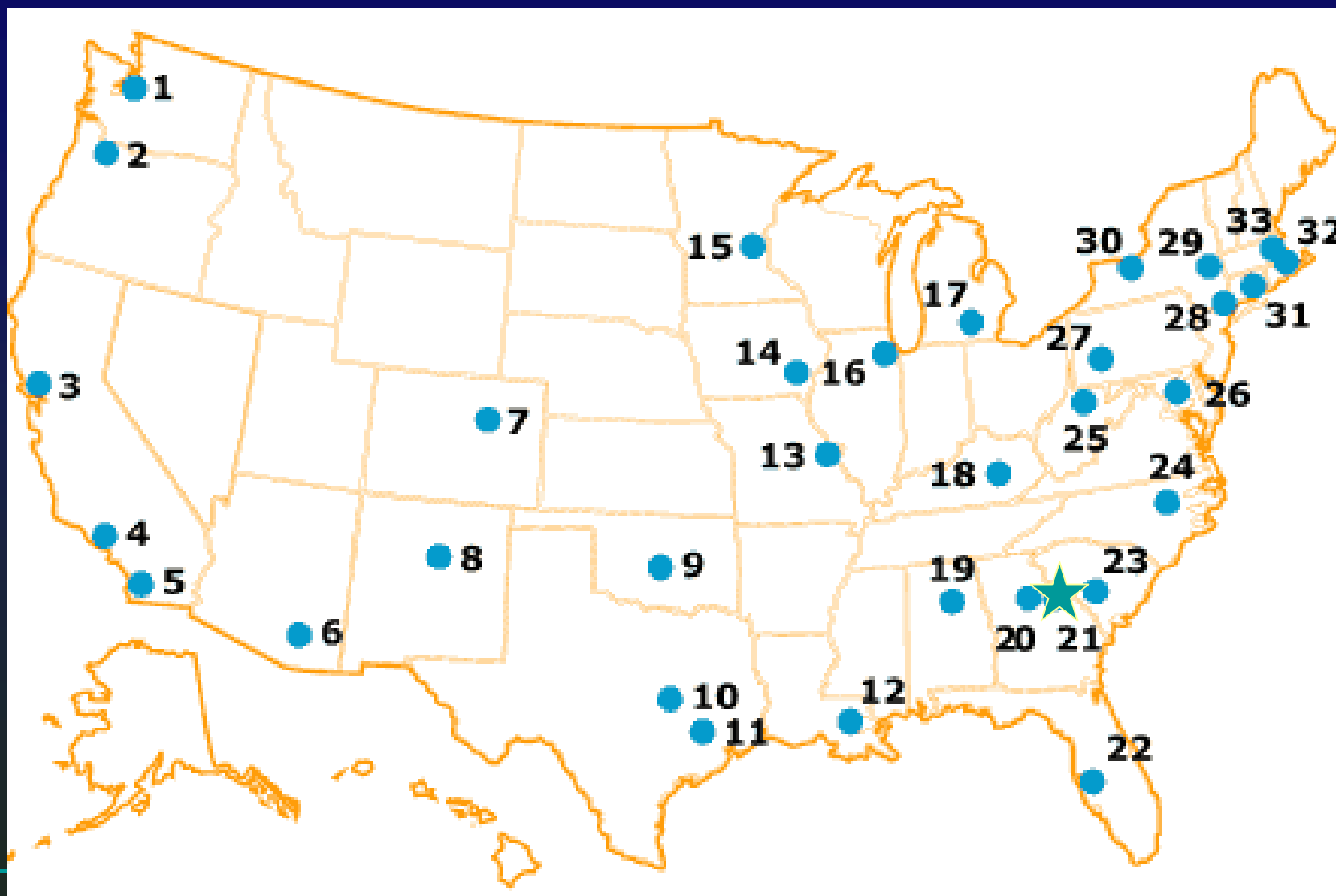
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Emory Prevention Research Center

- Funded by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
- Part of nationwide network of 33 PRCs; one of two centers in Georgia (with Morehouse)
- Initial funding period: 2004–2009; with the possibility of renewal
- Focus on cancer prevention & reducing health disparities in rural Southwest Georgia

Prevention Research Centers (Emory PRC is #21)



Goals & Activities

- Conduct research on cancer prevention
- Provide training & education
- Disseminate our results
- Deliver technical assistance for research & evaluation
- Evaluate our own efforts

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Principles

CBPR:

- Facilitates collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of the research
- Builds on strengths and resources within a community
- Promotes co-learning and capacity building among all partners
- Integrates and achieves a balance between research and action to mutual benefit of all partners
- Involves a long-term process and commitment

(Israel et al., 2003)

Southwest Georgia Partners



Primary Community Partner:

- Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition

Other Partners:

- SW Georgia Area Health Education Center (SOWEGA-AHEC)
- Local American Cancer Society
- Phoebe Putney Health System
- Albany State University, Darton College, Georgia Southwestern University
- Regional Health Districts
- Regional Cancer Centers
- Local government
- Local churches

Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- Represents the Southwest Georgia community (33 counties)
- 18-20 members
- Meets quarterly
- Provides guidance to the EPRC
- Draws on strong relationship to Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition

Guidelines for Collaboration describes the collective values of the partners and lays out roles, responsibilities, and strategies for making decisions

EPRC Research Agenda: Research Themes

■ Primary Prevention:

- Nutrition, physical activity (obesity), and tobacco use behaviors



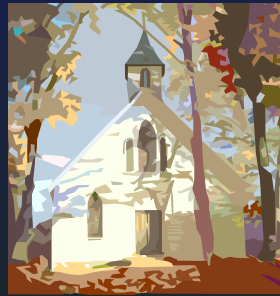
■ Conceptual Theme:

- Environmental strategies to promote healthy behaviors and prevent cancer (e.g., physical and social environments rather than individual factors)



Social Environments

- Widespread acknowledgement of the role of social-environmental variables in shaping behavior
- Home, church and worksite environments have been identified as likely important sources of influence on health-related behaviors



Healthy Rural Communities 1

Qualitative Study of Contextual Influences on Tobacco Use, Nutrition and Physical Activity

- In what ways do home, work and church environments support and/or hinder:
 - Smoking cessation & exposure to secondhand smoke
 - Healthy eating
 - Regular physical activity
 - 60 semi-structured, in-person interviews with adults in Calhoun and Terrell counties
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Research Methods

- Sample:
 - Recruited 60 African-American and White older adults (>50 years) by directly approaching people in neighborhoods, through word of mouth, and through key community organizations such as churches and health departments
 - Long-term residents of Calhoun or Terrell counties who lived with at least one other person
- Conducted semi-structured in-person interviews (conducted by residents hired by the Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition and trained by EPRC)
- Interviews tape-recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed for themes

Highlights From HRC1:

Home and Neighborhood Physical Activity Environments

- Neighborhood features supporting physical activity included: plenty of space, minimal traffic, safe and friendly neighborhoods
- Major barrier was lack of nearby recreational facilities
- Most NOT physically active with family members due to schedule conflicts and lack of time
- Family-based efforts to promote physical activity were met with mixed results: refusals, procrastination and increased activity

Highlights From HRC1:

Home and Neighborhood Nutrition Environments

- Generally easy to get healthy foods, although cost and need to drive to larger towns for better variety were barriers
- About 1/2 had engaged in family discussions about weight, with reactions ranging from agreement about the need for weight loss to frustration

Kegler M, Escoffery C, Alcantara I, Ballard D, Glanz K. A qualitative study of home and neighborhood environments for obesity prevention in rural families. Submitted to *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* (soon!)

HOW We Partnered for Research

■ CAB Involvement:

- Staff solicited opinions on what we should try to learn via one-on-one interviews with CAB members
- CAB members pilot tested interview guide
- CAB selected counties
- CAB decided eligibility criteria
- CAB helped interpret findings
- CAB member co-authoring manuscript

HOW We Partnered for Research

- Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition role:
 - Conducted interviews with CAB members
 - Hired and supervised interviewers
 - Promoted research in selected counties
 - Recruited participants
 - Assisted with quality control of interviews
 - Managed study paperwork and materials (e.g., consent forms, audio tapes)

Healthy Rural Communities 2

Social-Environmental & Individual
Determinants of Smoking, Diet and
Physical Activity



Healthy Rural Communities 2

- ❑ Cross-sectional survey (n=527) with longitudinal follow-up of high-risk participants (n=326) for 12 months.
- ❑ Minimum of 100 respondents in each of 4 counties: Brooks, Decatur, Sumter and Worth
- ❑ Self-administered survey at baseline with two follow-up telephone interviews (on subset)

Study Design

- Counties selected: Brooks, Decatur, Sumter, Worth
 - More than 30% African-American
 - Not contiguous
- Criteria for including participants:
 - Age: 40-70 years old
 - Resident of county for at least 5 years
 - Share household with at least one person
 - African Americans and Caucasians
 - Only one participant per household

Survey Topics

- Demographics and general health conditions
- Self-reported height and weight, waist circumference

- Healthy eating behaviors
 - Individual: fruit and vegetable consumption, self-efficacy, stages of change
 - Environmental/Social: food inventory, family support, availability of and access to healthy foods, access to nutrition programs

- Physical activity behaviors
 - Individual: physical activity behaviors, self-efficacy, stages of change
 - Environmental/Social: family support, neighborhood walkability, availability of and access to physical activity facilities and programs

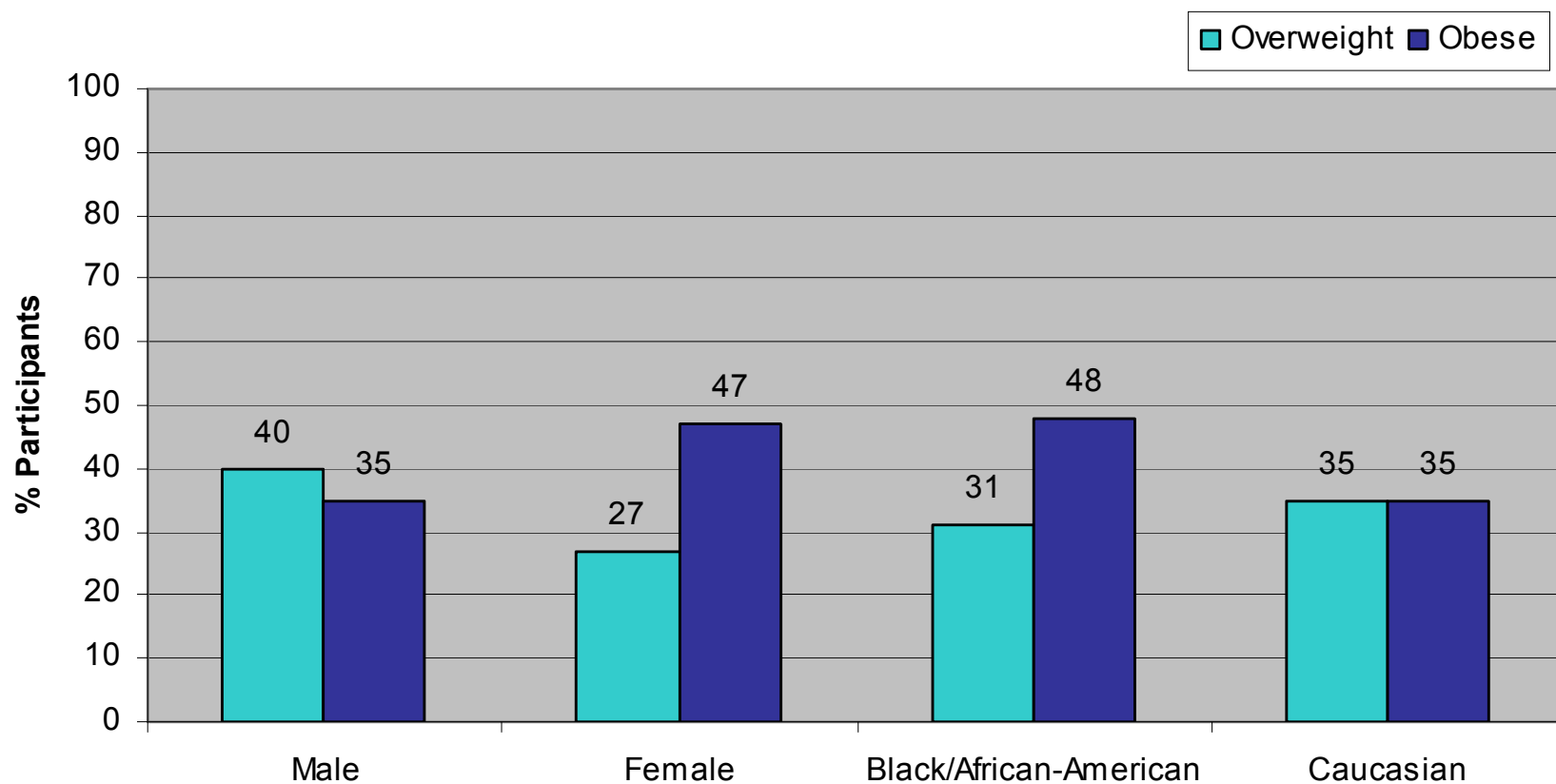
- Tobacco use
 - Individual: cigarette use, cessation attempts, stages of change, self-efficacy
 - Environmental/Social: social support, smoking policy, availability of smoking cessation programs

Note: Assessed environmental determinants in home, church and worksite settings

HRC2 Study Participants (n=527)

- 54% female, 46% male
- 50% African American, 50% White
- 63% married/living with partner
- 37% less than \$25,000 annual household income

Weight (overweight/obese) Status (n=527)



χ^2 (df=3) = 12.16, $p = .007$

χ^2 (df=3) = 15.48, $p = .001$

Study 3: Intervention Study to Promote Healthy Home Environments

- Goal: To improve home environments to better support healthy eating and physical activity
- Strategies:
 - Assess home environment for opportunities to support physical activity and/or healthy eating
 - Review a menu of Healthy Family Actions
 - Negotiate family contract to implement selected healthy actions

Selected Other Activities

- Mini-grants to local organizations to support evidence-based cancer prevention programs*
- Training on evidence-based approaches to cancer prevention*
- Multiple trainings on evaluation
- Support for establishing local affiliate of the American Evaluation Association in SW Georgia

*Supported by the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network

Major Benefits to Partnership from Academic Perspective

- Local input in helping ensure research is relevant and culturally appropriate
- Increases the likelihood that the research results in action
- Access to study populations and organizations for recruitment
- Local partners to manage data collection
- Audiences and partners for training activities
- Partners for additional grant-writing