



Susan G. Komen

Research Grants – Fiscal Year 2015

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Training Program in Breast Cancer Survivorship Disparities Research

Investigator(s): Karen Meneses, Ph.D.; Wendy Demark-Wahnefried, Ph.D., R.D.

Lead Organization: University of Alabama at Birmingham

Grant Mechanism: Graduate Training in Disparities Research Grants

Grant ID: GTDR15329376

Public Abstract:

Eight years after the 2006 landmark report of the Institute of Medicine, “From cancer patient to cancer survivor: Lost in transition,” significant gaps in survivorship remain, particularly among the underserved. Female breast cancer survivors represent 22% of the 14.5 million cancer survivors in the U.S. Advances have occurred in testing interventions to reduce long term and late effects, improvement in healthy lifestyle behaviors, survivorship care planning, and the economic toxicity of cancer. Yet, these advancements have not been realized in underserved and minority populations particularly across the Deep South. The proposed BCSDR seeks to reduce survivorship disparities through training our next generation of independent investigators in breast cancer survivorship disparities research.

The overall objectives of the Training Program in Breast Cancer Survivorship Disparities Research (BCSDR) are to: (1) train predoctoral students from multiple disciplines to conduct research in breast cancer disparities; (2) increase the number of minority doctoral students engaged in breast cancer survivorship disparities research; (3) provide a specialized core curriculum of didactic and tailored research activities in breast cancer survivorship disparities; (4) foster the development of independent research careers in breast cancer survivorship disparities research; and (5) engage trainees to contribute to the reduction of disparities within their community of interest. In summary, our overall goal is to train the next generation of independent investigators in team science to reduce breast cancer survivorship disparities.



Several confluent trends support the BCSDR at UAB. First, a growing and robust group of senior research scientists have sustained research programs in breast cancer survivorship and disparities research. Second, UAB has a long-standing record of recruiting and retaining both qualified minority students and faculty; with sustained minority enrollment between 20-40%. Third, UAB has both outstanding institutional infrastructure and Comprehensive Cancer Center commitment directed toward the elimination of health disparities.

The Principal Investigator and co-PI have the requisite research and mentoring training experience. Drs. Meneses and Demark-Wahnefried have related yet distinct areas of breast cancer research in disparities examining quality of life and adherence outcomes, and behavioral nutritional and physical activity outcomes in breast cancer. Both scientists have sustained experience with a variety of behavioral intervention designs including randomized clinical trials, exploratory feasibility studies, and qualitative and economic evaluation outcomes.

The objectives, design and focus of the Training Program in BCSDR address critical elements in breast cancer disparities research and fill an urgent gap in training minority scientists in a region of the Deep South with little access to survivorship programs.

