Committee Updates

Welcome to the first issue of the Cultural Diversity Committee Newsletter, 2022!

This newsletter features one of our 2021 Cultural Diversity Research Interns, most recent research articles on the topics of cultural diversity in ASD, updates on the Cultural Diversity Career Advancement (C-CAP) initiative, and resources.

If you would like to be featured or would like to nominate someone to be featured in the Spotlight section of our newsletter, have any upcoming publications, or know of any resources that are related to cultural diversity and autism, let us know!

Contact email: culturaldiversitycommittee@autism-insar.org
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SPOTLIGHT: 2021 RESEARCH INTERN

FERNANDA A. CASTELLÓN M.A.

Educational Background
Ms. Castellón (she/her/hers) is a Doctoral student from the Human Development and Psychology Division in the Education PhD program at the University of California, Los Angeles. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Chicana/o/x Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara where she worked as a research assistant as a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and clinician at the Koegel Autism Center under the supervision of Dr. Lynn K. Koegel. As a UCLA doctoral student, Ms. Castellón received training as an educational support specialist with an emphasis in inclusive practices for autistic children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Ms. Castellón earned her Master’s in Education and completed a thesis focused on the trends of English Proficiency among students from a large urban school district who were served under the disability criteria of Autism and were also identified as English Learners (EL). Under the guidance of Dr. Connie Kasari, Ms. Castellon has been trained as a JASPER interventionist and has been an active participant in the multisite multiyear Autism Intervention Network for Behavioral Health (AIR-B).

Interest and Background in Cultural Diversity Research
Ms. Castellón is interested in the influence of minority culture on autism symptomatology, interventions, school experiences, and family dynamics, all with the focus to promote high quality of life for autistic individuals and their families. She has advocated for cultural adaptations in research recruitment methodologies, research materials and protocols, and intervention implementation. Ms. Castellón has partnered with various community-based organizations to bridge the gap between research and community settings through Community conferences in English, Spanish, and Korean. She has performed various qualitative studies with parents of autistic children to understand the role of siblings and language brokering to access autism services and the promotion of bilingualism among autistic children.

INSAR Internship Project
Under the mentorship of Dr. Paul Luelmo at San Diego State University, Ms. Castellón performed a multi-phase community-based research project focused on transfronterizo parents of autistic children who resided along the USA-Mexico border. She conducted focus groups to develop culturally appropriate research protocols with community stakeholders. She also performed qualitative interviews with parents of autistic children who a) have attempted to access autism services in the US while residing in Mexico or b) have moved to the US in search of autism services. Ms. Castellón’s findings aim to document the experiences, motivations, and resilience of transfronterizo parents of children on the autism spectrum.

Future Career Goals
Ms. Castellón hopes to pursue a career in academia where she can continue to conduct research and work alongside community service providers and parents to create culturally relevant interventions and services. She hopes to continue performing international research and solidifying cross-border connections to improve the quality of life of transfronterizo families.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Highlights

  
  Highlighting the influence of culture in social communication, Golson and colleagues “call for increased commitment from researchers to recruit racially and ethnically minoritized participants, prioritize investigating cultural expectations and perceptions of social communication and interaction, and evaluate measures related to social communication for cultural and linguistic responsivity.”

  
  Publication abstract: “The research on autism spectrum disorder (ASD) disproportionately originates from high-income countries, indicating a disparity of research in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). One possible reason for this disparity is a lack of culturally appropriate screening and diagnostic tools for use in LMIC. Although a number of tools are commonly used in the United States, it is likely that using these tools in contexts in which they were not intended may be problematic. As such, this study examined factors that may inhibit the feasibility and usability of common ASD assessment tools in LMIC. Assessments were analyzed for readability, initial and continued cost, training required, restrictions on purchasing, materials required, and presence of items assessing expressive and receptive language. Results of the study indicated that the majority of validated ASD assessment tools present a multitude of barriers for use in LMIC. Implications for research and practice are discussed.”

Open Access


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Open Access


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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Regular Access


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Regular Access


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Regular Access


C-CAP UPDATES

- Since launching at the INSAR Annual Meeting in May 2021, the INSAR Cultural Diversity Career Advancement Program (C-CAP) held virtual sessions for the international autism community on mentoring and grant writing. In a virtual meeting in September 2021, autism researchers from around the globe shared information about their own career paths and personal experiences as mentees and mentors. Speakers for these sessions on mentorship included Drs. Somer Bishop, Mapy Chavez, Mayada Elsabbagh, Vibha Krishnamurthy, Cecilia Montiel-Nava, Peter Mundy, and Chongying Wang.

- In January 2022, as part of the ongoing training initiative, C-CAP hosted three sessions on grant writing. At these sessions Dr. Sarah Dababnah shared her experience on the Fulbright Scholarship program, Dr. Alycia Halladay spoke about the grant opportunities at the Autism Science Foundation, and Dr. Youngshin Kim shared her experiences grant writing and translating work to international populations.

- In the upcoming months, C-CAP will hold sessions to get our mentors onboard, facilitate matches with our mentors and mentees, and plan sessions on other topics of interest that have been indicated by our participants.

RESOURCES

Anti-Black Racism Resources for Autism Clinicians - "Given the well-documented disparities in access to assessment, diagnosis, and high-quality services for Black autistic individuals, Autism clinicians have a duty to educate themselves about the intersection of anti-Black racism and autism services. Many clinicians wonder what they can do to address anti-Black racism in their settings." This website provides some concrete recommendations and resources: https://autismlab.psy.msu.edu/resources/anti-racism-resources/

DisabilityMeasures.org has developed a website (www.disabilitymeasures.org ) for sharing freely available disability assessment and measurement tools. We are seeking collaborators to recommend measures for inclusion and provide feedback for the future development of this tool.