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African immigrants are a fast-growing segment of the U.S. Black population, but the dementia care needs and resources of this population are not fully understood. We will describe the process of developing culturally informed instruments to collect data on dementia care needs and resources among African immigrants. Working together with a diverse project advisory board, a guide was developed and used to conduct community conversations about experiences with dementia/memory loss. Qualitative findings from these conversations were used to inform the development of a survey for quantitative data collection. Despite the challenges of conducting research during a global pandemic, having trusting relationships with a partnering community organization and project advisory board facilitated the successful development of instruments to conduct preliminary dementia care research in an underserved population. We anticipate that survey results will inform interventions that increase education, outreach, and access to dementia care and caregiving resources for this population.

THE TIES THAT RECRUIT, RETAIN, AND BIND: ENGAGING HISPANIC IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN THE TIME OF CRISIS

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In 2008, we launched Project RAMA (Risk Assessments for Mexican Americans) in Houston, Texas, seeking to understand how multigenerational Mexican immigrant families communicate about familial risk for complex disease. Several lessons were learned. First, our community advisory committee endorsed research goals. Second, we listened to the community with regards to immigration concerns and structural racism. Finally, in the summer and fall of 2008, Hurricane Ike struck the region. Because our team provided support and resources to families in need, we had a higher participation rate post-disaster. Pausing recruitment and postponing assessments led us to unexpectedly discover a long-term intervention effect that was not originally hypothesized. These lessons guide a new initiative focused on Hispanic immigrant families affected by rheumatoid arthritis in Washington DC. We discuss how we address challenges in the on-going project during the Covid pandemic, including recruiting through embedded community clinics and integrating community needs into study design.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITMENT OF ASIAN AMERICAN OLDER ADULTS

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Asian Americans one of the fastest growing older adult populations in the U.S., and are emerging as a high-need, lower-income population. Inclusion of Asian Americans in research is critical given anti-Asian rhetoric and hate crimes targeting Asian American older adults and because Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the U.S. We focus on recruitment strategies used during the implementation of 11 primary collection data efforts, including national and regional community health resources and needs assessment surveys, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic (starting May 2020). Unique recruitment challenges included the heterogeneity of language, culture, and sociodemographic characteristics of participants, digital literacy, and survey fatigue. Effective recruitment facilitators included: prioritizing community engagement at all research stages; aligning the research purpose with community priorities; recruitment through community-based organizations and bilingual community health workers; translating survey instruments; and regularly scheduled meetings with community-based organizations to discuss the survey progress.

SESSION 1490 (SYMPOSIUM)

LIFE AFTER LOSS: EMERGING INSIGHTS ON GRIEF ADJUSTMENT AND HEALTH IN LATE LIFE

Chair: Emily Mroz Co-Chair: Sara Hackett Discussant: Deborah Carr

Recent scholarship recognizes that grief adjustment is not a staged, linear process. In late life, the loss of close others is common and dynamic. However, little is known about the ‘ripple effects’ from loss experiences. As people are living longer, it is important to gain insight regarding how loss is processed, carried, and used for self-direction. This symposium responds to GSA’s 2022 meeting theme of “Reimagining Aging” by presenting emerging research which reimagines grief adjustment across diverse populations. To begin, Sara Hackett, PhD will share her work on the continuing bonds of older conjugally bereaved women and how they shape perceptions about repartnering. Following, Emily Mroz, PhD will present on affective sequences in final memories from past spousal loss and demonstrate how sequences predict future caregiving confidence in these widowed older adults. Danielle McDuffie, MA will add to this rich discussion by shedding light on predictors of bereavement and grief outcomes specific to Black adults. Last, Holly Prigerson, PhD will outline unmet psychological needs of family caregivers of patients who die in ICU settings and present her work on EMPOWER, an intervention aimed to reduce psychological distress and foster caregiver adjustment across the loss experience in this setting. Stephanie Wladkowski, PhD, our discussant, will tie these perspectives together, facilitating an important dialogue regarding classic and newly-considered impacts of grief in late life. Further, she will discuss how through more closely examining peoples’ experiences during and after loss, we can recognize late-life bereavement as shaping self-perceptions, relationships, and mental health.

THE GUIDING POWER OF LOSS REFLECTION: FINAL MEMORIES AND FUTURE CARE

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The life story framework emphasizes that past loss experiences guide current attitudes and behaviors. Final memories from the death of a spouse promote post-loss meaning-making. Through reliable narrative analysis, this study delineates positive and negative affective sequences in final memories from spousal loss in older adults (N = 63; Mage = 81.59). It also examines reported confidence in successfully caring for