
Publications, Posters, Presentations in Scientific/Professional Meetings and Other Scientific Activities

Axel Santos Figueroa, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Publications

- Varas, N., Santos, A., & Walters, K. (2010). Internalized HIV/AIDS stigma and depressive symptomatology among Puerto Ricans living with the virus. (In process).
- Santos, A. & Fernandez, E. (2009). Strategies used in psychotherapy with an adult male survivor of sexual abuse in childhood: A Case Study. (In Spanish) [Online]. Revista Electrónica Psicología Científica.Com. <http://www.psicologiacientifica.com/bv/psicologia-397-1-estrategias-utilizadas-en-psicoterapia-con-un-adulto-sobrevi.html>
- Santos, A. (2008). The impact of sexual abuse and child maltreatment in an adult Puerto Rican male (In Spanish) [Online]. Revista Electrónica Psicología Científica.Com. <http://www.psicologiacientifica.com/bv/psicologia-381-1-el-impacto-del-maltrato-infantil-y-el-abuso-sexual-en-un-hom.html>
- Santos, A. & Toro, J. (2005). Theoretical aspects of violence in couple relationships (In Spanish). In J. Toro & S. Rodríguez (Eds.), *Al margen del género: La violencia doméstica en parejas del mismo sexo*. San Juan, PR: Ediciones Huracán.
- Bonilla, J., Bernal, G., Santos, A., & Santos, D. (2004). A revised version of the Beck Depression Inventory: Psychometric properties with a Puerto Rican sample of college students. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 60, 119-130.
- Santos, A., Bonilla, J., & Bernal, G. (2003). Stress and depressive symptomatology in Puerto Rican samples (In Spanish). In G. Bernal y J. Bonilla (Eds.), *La depresión: Estudios psicológicos en Puerto Rico y Cuba* (pp. 165-183). San Juan, Puerto Rico: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas.
- Santos, A., & Bernal, G. (2001). Stressful life events and depression symptoms in three Puerto Rican samples (In Spanish). *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 1, 475-494.
- Bernal, G., Varas, N., Bonilla, J., Santos, A., & Maldonado, M. (1998). Depression and gender: Early results of a collaborative study in the Caribbean (In Spanish). *30 Años de Psicología Dominicana: Pasado, Presente y Futuro*. Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria-UASD.
- Santos, A., Bernal, G., & Bonilla, J. (1998). Stressful life events and their relation to depressive symptomatology (In Spanish). *Avances en Psicología Clínica Latinoamericana*, 16, 121-132.

Presentations

- Santos, A., Wendichansky, C., & Negrón, L. (2010, March). *Intimate Partner Violence: Differences turn into inequalities*. Oral presentation at the 8th Caribbean Congress of Psychology: New Challenges for Psychology, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- Santos, A. (2010, March). *Strategies used in psychotherapy with an adult male survivor of sexual abuse in childhood*. Oral presentation at the 8th Caribbean Congress of Psychology: New Challenges for Psychology, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- Santos, A. (2010, March). *Conectándonos con el Ruiseñor que canta en nuestro interior*. Book presentation at Ponce School of Medicine, Ponce, Puerto Rico.
- Santos, A. & Varas, N. (2009, June-July). *Internalized HIV/AIDS stigma and depressive symptomatology among Puerto Ricans living with the virus*. Panel presentation at the 32nd Interamerican Congress of Psychology, Guatemala City, Guatemala.
- Santos, A. & Varas, N. (2009, March). *Internalized HIV/AIDS stigma and depressive symptomatology among Puerto Ricans living with the virus*. Oral presentation at the 7th Dominican-Puerto Rican Psychology Congress, Ponce, Puerto Rico.
- Santos, A. (2006, April). *La Espiritualidad hecha hombre*. Book presentation at Ananda Bookstore, Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico.
- Santos, A. & Toro, J. (2005, October). *Theoretical aspects of violence in couple relationships*. Book presentation *Al margen del género: La violencia doméstica entre parejas del mismo sexo*. Borders, Plaza Las Américas, San Juan, P.R.
- Santos, A. & Toro, J. (2005, March). *Theoretical aspects of violence in couple relationships*. Book presentation *Al margen del género: La violencia doméstica entre parejas del mismo sexo*. *School of Fine Arts*, San Juan, P.R.
- Santos, A., Loubriel, M., Aguilar, D., Costas, M., Rivera, D., y Carrión, M. (2002, November). *The clinical internship: Experiences from and for the clinical training*. Oral presentation at the 49th Convention of the Puerto Rico Psychologist Association. Ponce, Puerto Rico.
- Bernal, G., Bonilla, J., Scharrón, M., & Santos, A. (1999, November). *Studies about depression: Early results*. Oral presentation at the 46th Convention of the Puerto Rico Psychologist Association. San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Santos, A., Bernal, G. (1999, November). *The Life Experiences Survey in three Puerto Rican samples*. Oral presentation at the 46th Convention of the Puerto Rico Psychologist Association. San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Bonilla, J., Bernal, G., Santos, A., & Maldonado, M. (1999, July). *Depressive symptomatology measures: Psychometric properties in a Puerto Rican sample*. Oral presentation at the XXVII Interamerican Congress of Psychology. Caracas, Venezuela.
- Bernal, G., Santos, A., Maldonado, M., & Bonilla, J. (1999, July). *Toward a vulnerability model for depression in the Caribbean*. Oral presentation at the XXVII Interamerican Congress of Psychology. Caracas, Venezuela.
- Bernal, G., Bonilla, J., Varas, N., Santos, A., & Maldonado, M. (1997). *Depression and the BDI Revised: Reliability and construct validity*. Oral presentation at the Congress "30 years of Dominican Psychology: Past, present and future." Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

- Bonilla, J., Santos, A., Lugo, E., & Bernal, G. (1996, October). *A vulnerability model for depression*. Oral presentation at the II International Conference of Health Psychology. La Habana, Cuba.
- Bonilla, J., Portel, Y., Arce, V., & Santos, A. (1995, July). *Evaluation of cognitive processes associated to depression: The Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (DAS)*. Oral presentation at the XXV Interamerican Congress of Psychology. San Juan, PR.
- Santos, A. (1994, November). *Reliability of measures on depressive symptomatology with Puerto Ricans: A Pilot study*. Poster presentation at the NIMH-COR Colloquium, Washington DC.

Scientific Activities

Grants

Role: Co-Investigator

Funding Source: National Institute of Health

Project title: *Aids Stigma among Health professionals in Puerto Rico (1R01MH08694-01A2)*.

Principal Investigator: Nelson Varas Díaz, Ph.D.

Duration: 2008-2012

Role: Pre-doctoral Trainee

Funding Source: Minority Supplements for Underrepresented Minorities. National Institute of Health

Project Title: *Latino Research Program Project (PO1MH59876)- Effectiveness of interventions: Treatments for Depression*; University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus

Principal Investigator: Margarita Alegría, Ph.D.

Duration: 2000-2001

Role: Principal Investigator (PI)

Funding Source: Graduate Studies and Research Deanship, University of Puerto Rico; Individual Institutional Funds for Research Grant to support work in the master's thesis

Project Title: *Evaluation of a stressful life events measure and its relation with depressive symptomatology*; University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras

Duration: August 1999-June 2000.

Role: Research Fellow

Funding Source: Career Opportunities in Research, National Institute of Mental Health.

Project Title: *Evaluation of Psychometric Properties of Measures to Identify Depressive Symptomatology among Adults*; University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras

Main objective: Through this research fellowship I participated in research training at an undergraduate level in different summer internships, and research projects related to depression, and instrument validation.

Duration: June 1994-July 1996.

Current Projects

Project Title: AIDS Stigma Among Health Professionals in Puerto Rico: Intervention Development and Implementation.

Principal Investigator: Nelson Varas Díaz, UPR-RP, Co-Investigators: Axel Santos Figueroa, PSM and Clemente Díaz, UPR-MSU

Aims

The stigma related to HIV/AIDS poses challenges to the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). These are worsened when health professionals manifest it. This is particularly true for physicians who represent the first line of contact for treatment and the basis of knowledge of effective strategies to treat the disease. When physicians stigmatize PLWHA access to effective treatment can be hindered. Previous studies carried out by the research team in Puerto Rico show that health professionals, particularly physicians, manifest high levels of HIV/AIDS stigma. Scientifically tested strategies to reduce such stigma are urgently needed and should be provided during their professional training since they are open to learning new ideas about the physician's role in the lives of people who are ill. Still, a review of the published literature on HIV/AIDS stigma reduction evidences a lack of scientifically tested intervention targeting medical students. This five-year R01 study (01/01/08- 12/31/12) aims to revise and test the efficacy of an intervention to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma among medical students through a randomized control trial. The specific aims of the proposed research are:

Aim 1: Revise and implement an intervention to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma and evaluate its acceptability among medical students in their last year of training.

Aim 2: Evaluate the intervention's efficacy in reducing HIV/AIDS stigma immediately after the intervention and at six months time.

Aim 3: Evaluate whether proposed mechanisms of stigma change, specifically HIV information, skills for identifying stigma and interacting with PLWHA, and self-efficacy for such skills, explain stigma reduction after the intervention.

Patients/subjects

The final sample for the study will be 446 medical students that will be randomly assigned to an intervention or control group (223 intervention and 223 control group). These participants should meet the following criteria: be Puerto Rican, adults (at least 21 years of age), and currently be medical students in their last year of training. Inclusion criteria include the following: being Puerto Rican, older than 21 years of age, and, be a medical student at the University of Puerto Rico or the Ponce School of Medicine at the time of recruitment. Exclusion will be determined if participants do not meet the inclusion criteria.

Investigational Methods and Procedures

These project aims will be carried out through a randomized control trial implemented in two stages. In Stage 1, we will revise an existing intervention to reduce HIV/AIDS

stigma among health professionals based on our previous research. In Stage 2, the intervention will be implemented among a sample of 446 medical students who will be randomly assigned to intervention (n=223) and control groups (n=223) and subjected to a process and impact evaluation administering a quantitative questionnaire before, immediately after, and six months after the intervention. Participants will be recruited at the University of Puerto Rico's Medical Sciences Campus and the Ponce School of Medicine. Their participation will be completely voluntary.

Project Title:

Assessment and prevention of social anxiety in Spain and several Latin American countries: a transcultural study

Principal Investigator: Vicente Caballo, Universidad de Granada, Co-Investigators: Axel Santos Figueroa, José Pons, PSM

Aims:

The purpose of this study is to assess the social situations that cause more problems in Spain and

other Latino-American countries. Specifically, this study will:

1. Identify the most common social situations that produce anxiety in the different countries participating in the study.
2. Develop and validate a questionnaire to collect these situations in different countries and find the similarities and differences between them.
3. Planning a prevention program, with special emphasis on social skills.
4. Application of the prevention program by researchers from different countries.

The countries initially included in the project (with at least one investigator from each country) are: Puerto Rico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Spain, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Patients/subjects

For the non-clinical sample we will recruit a total of 300 participants (150 men and 150 female). For the clinical sample we expect to recruit a total of 100 patients. Inclusion criteria for the non-clinical sample are: 1) 16 years and older; for the clinical sample: 1) 16 years and older; 2) people who have any diagnosis of a psychiatric or psychological disorder; 3) persons who are in the assessment stage or beginning treatment.

Research Methods and Procedures

The work plan is expected to be developed along three stages. The activities or tasks along these three stages would be as follows:

First stage

Development and administration of a questionnaire that includes social situations that produce anxiety. Data Analysis.

Second phase

Development of a prevention program for social anxiety, with an emphasis on social

skills. We will develop variations of this prevention program, taking into consideration the specific characteristics of the countries involved in the study.

Third stage

In the third phase the prevention program and its variations (corresponding to each of the countries) will be edited in a DVD format. This DVD will be share with the researchers of the study for their implementation in different countries.

Measures: Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS) is a questionnaire whose objective is to assess the range of social interaction and performance situations that individuals with social phobia may fear and/or avoid. It is also a popular measurement tool used by researches to evaluate the efficiency of various social anxiety disorder treatments, including pharmacological trials. A modified social anxiety scale exists for children and adolescents. The questionnaire includes 24 items. Each item consists of a given situation, the rate of anxiety (0 to 3 = none, mild, moderate, severe) and the rate of avoidance (0 to 3 = never, occasionally, often, usually).

Conferences Attended

- 8th Caribbean Congress of Psychology: New Challenges for Psychology (March) 2010
- 56th Puerto Rico Psychologist Association Convention. Ponce, Puerto Rico (November) 2009
- NIH Workshop on Grantsmanship for Researchers with the Trans-Caribbean HIV/AIDS Research Initiative, Bethesda, Maryland (August-September) 2009
- 32nd Interamerican Congress of Psychology, Guatemala City, Guatemala.(June-July) 2009
- 5th Scientific Meeting, Ponce School of Medicine (June) 2009
- 6th Clinical Psychology Symposium, Ponce School of Medicine (March) 2009
- 7th Dominican-Puerto Rican Psychology Congress, Ponce, Puerto Rico (March) 2009
- 49th Puerto Rico Psychologist Association Convention. Ponce, Puerto Rico (November) 2002
- 46th Puerto Rico Psychologist Association Convention. San Juan, Puerto Rico 1999
- 27th Interamerican Congress of Psychology. Caracas, Venezuela 1999
- 30 years of Dominican Psychology: Past, present and future, Santo Domingo, DR 1997
- II International Conference of Health Psychology. La Habana, Cuba 1996
- 25th Interamerican Congress of Psychology. San Juan, PR 1995
- NIMH-COR Colloquium, Washington DC 1994