

A Cultural Adaptation of the USC Well Elderly Intervention for Spanish-speaking Older Adults: A Qualitative Study

Jeanne Jackson, Erna Imperatore-Blanche, Florence Clark, Deborah Mandel
University of Southern California, California, United States

Introduction: As the percentage of older adults of diverse ethnicities increases in the United States, the need for culturally sensitive health care service strategies grows. The second Well Elderly clinical trial culturally adapted the Lifestyle Redesign[®] intervention for Spanish-speaking participants using qualitative procedures that were developed in the original Well Elderly Study. Lifestyle Redesign[®] is an occupation-based, six month long intervention for independent, community dwelling older adults. The goal of the program is for individuals to achieve an in-depth understanding of the role of daily activity in affecting their health and life satisfaction and then, with the support of an occupational therapist, to discover and incorporate sustainable health promoting activities into their lives.

Objectives: In this presentation, specific qualitative research procedures that were used to culturally adapt the treatment program will be described, along with the particular adaptations that emerged.

Methods: The Lifestyle Redesign[®] intervention involved weekly group meetings at a senior center or senior residence, community outings, and up to 10 hours of individualized intervention. Given the in-depth and personalized nature of the program, the study team determined that the basic English-based protocol was insufficiently sensitive to local Spanish-speaking cultures to be able to engage participants at a meaningful level. Therefore both the methods and materials were culturally adapted. Qualitative research procedures were used to adapt the treatment program. These methods included the use of "cultural brokers," interviews with potential participants, and ongoing feedback from the bilingual, bicultural occupational therapist administering the intervention.

Results: The results of qualitative procedures for adapting the intervention included: sensitivity to the role and importance of family and family values; inclusion of family; increased emphasis on pictures and demonstrations to accompany reading materials; modification of nutrition and dining sessions to reflect cultural food choices; and consideration of values stemming from religious affiliations.

Conclusion/Contribution: In order to engage participants at a meaningful level, complex interventions such as Lifestyle Redesign, requires a cultural adaptation of methods and materials. This study provides insights and methods for occupational therapists to adopt in increasingly multi-ethnic practice arenas and improve overall health care for populations which are often marginalized.