LARRC Pilot Grant Awarded to Support Faculty Research Study

By Dr. Viola Benavente, Assistant Professor

The 2017 Latino Aging Research Resource Center (LARRC) Pilot Grant Award Latinos, one of the largest and fastest growing segments of the US older adult population, suffer disparities in risk factors for cognitive decline, disease burden, caregiver distress, and access to good quality services and healthcare for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. To advance the cognitive health and well-being of older Latinos and their families and close gaps in care, the Latino Aging Research Resource Center (LARRC) provide pilot funding and mentors to diverse junior faculty conducting impactful and community-engaged research addressing Latino cognitive health and aging.

LARRC, one of seven national NIH funded Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR), works closely with the University of California (UC) at Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center and with other regional academic institutions. The interdisciplinary Center supports investigators from UC Davis and other institutions through the activities of four units, or cores: Administrative Core, Investigator Development Core, Analysis Core and Community Liaison Core.

Dr. Benavente's Pilot Grant Award is for $25,000 in support of conducting her study entitled, “Heart Technologies and Cognitive Health Promotion of Postmenopausal Latinas.” The overall goal of this research study is to inform the development of a cutting-edge health information and communication technology program by conducting an iterative pilot evaluation guided by the Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance (RE-AIM) framework that involves testing and refining an electronic (e-) health module in a vulnerable population. The purpose of this pilot study was informed by prior work that led to the conceptualization of a cardiovascular e-health promotion program comprised of three educational modules. This program is entitled GUIA del Corazón and designed to promote both cardiovascular and cognitive health. In order to fully develop this program, it is necessary to first design a prototype model in English and Spanish using a test/re-test design. Therefore, the specific aims are to design a prototype of the first cardiovascular e-health promotion module on a portable tablet and then test, refine, and re-test it for usability and initial efficacy.
The pilot funds will support development of the first prototype module called “Understand Your Heart,” and will be focused on the following four areas associated with cardiovascular disease and well-being: (a) health responsibility and general health; (b) stressors, anxiety or episodes of depression; (c) interpersonal relationships and support; and (d) spiritual growth and awareness.