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Southern Health Centers Unite for $9.8M to Study Latino Cancer Survivorship

The Hispanic/Latino Cancer Survivorship Study will unpack the cultural, biological and medical influences on post-cancer life.

June 4, 2021 By Casey Halter

Leading medical schools in San Antonio and Miami are teaming up this year for a national cohort study on cancer survivors in Latino communities. The study seeks to examine the social, cultural, behavioral, biological and medical influences on post-cancer life in one of the nation's most at-risk communities, The San Antonio Business Journal reports.

Titled "Avanzando Caminos (Leading Pathways): The Hispanic/Latino Cancer Survivorship Study" is funded by a six-year, $9.8 million grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). It will pair researchers at UT Health San Diego's Mays Cancer Center with their colleagues at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami to study post-cancer life across a diverse cohort of 3,000 Latino breast, colorectal, kidney, lung, prostate, stomach and cervical cancer survivors. Recruitment is now open.

The researchers aim to study how various issues, from health care discrimination to depression, stress, diet and genetics may be impacting Latino cancer survivors and their quality of life post-remission. The reason? U.S. Latinos face a projected 142% rise in cancer cases by 2030 and have a much higher risk for certain cancers, such as liver cancer, compared with whites.

Researchers say that the risk and disparities are driven by numerous factors, including cultural barriers to care, low screening rates, underrepresentation in clinical studies and late diagnosis.

"The opportunity to assess multiple determinants of quality of life and health outcomes among Latino cancer survivors who are diverse in regard to country of origin and geographic location in the U.S. will help us better understand how social, cultural, behavioral, psychosocial and biological factors impact cancer outcomes, and to guide interventions that promote optimal well-being," said Frank J. Penedo, PhD, study co–principal investigator at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Moving forward, Penedo and colleagues say they will analyze all aspects of the Latino cancer

survivorship journey, including health literacy, access to care, gene expression, common comorbidities and cardiometabolic markers unique to this population.

To learn more about how cancer disproportionately affects the Latino community in the United States, see "It's Time to Grapple With Higher Rate of Cancer Among Latinos."

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