

Native Proverbs 31 Health Project

Project Summary

Why is this study being done?

American Indians (AIs) have higher rates of cardiovascular disease (CVD) compared to whites, and largely because of high rates of factors that increase the risk of CVD, including high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and tobacco use. Statistics show that smoking and other non-traditional use of tobacco is also higher among AI populations than among other races. AI women are especially affected by these factors. While many of these factors can be improved through changes in health behaviors, culturally appropriate approaches are needed to help address these concerns.

The Christian church is an important part of the life of many Lumbee people. Churches can serve as partners in delivering health education to the community. “The Native Proverbs 31 Health Project” will determine the effect of a church-based program to prevent CVD risk factors among Lumbee women and their daughters.

What is the goal of this study?

The focus of this project is chapter 31 of Proverbs in the Bible, which describes a virtuous woman’s responsibility to maintain spiritual, social, and physical health for herself and her family.

Who and what is involved in this study?

The study, funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, involves participation from the Lumbee community and will be conducted as a partnership between the Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity (MACHE) at Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM), Department of Family & Community Medicine at WFUSM, the Native American Interfaith Ministries (Healing Lodge), and Proverbs 31 Ministry. In this study, we will develop and deliver a community-based, culturally appropriate CVD program for Lumbee Indian women in Robeson County, NC focusing on the health-related messages in Proverbs. The study will be conducted in two phases. In **Phase 1**, we will conduct focus groups with church leaders and female church members to determine the roles of the churches and to better understand how AI women might respond to church-based health promotion messages. In **Phase 2**, the program will be conducted in participating churches. The program will focus on diet behaviors (lowering fat, increasing fruits and vegetables and fiber intake), physical activity, and harmful tobacco cessation and prevention. The impact of the program will be measured through questionnaires and measures of changes in body weight among women and their adolescent daughters.

For further information, contact:

Dr. Ronny Bell, Professor of Epidemiology and Prevention
Director, Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity
Wake Forest University School of Medicine
Medical Center Boulevard
Winston-Salem, NC 27157
rbell@wfubmc.edu 336-716-9736