

PIMSA Final Narrative Report

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Project Title: "Perceptions Regarding Sexual Health and HIV Risk Among Female Farmworkers"

Timeline: March 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013

1. Major activities

Involvement with the Community Advisory Board (CAB): There are seven members who I invited to join the CAB, all from the study site including migrant farmworkers, service providers, and other community stakeholders. I have organized and facilitated three formal CAB meetings over the last year and a half. They were held in a community room at the Planned Parenthood offices in Coachella, CA, and approximately six people attended each meeting. Members were eager to give input into the research design, participant recruitment, and the semi-structured interview guide. They are invested in the research and offer a unique perspective of rural migrant life. In addition, I had approximately 10 informal meetings with five of the CAB members (one or two at a time), either at their homes or at a local restaurant. At these informal meetings, CAB members spontaneously shared about their lives and their own experiences with sexual risk with me. I also asked them questions to clarify aspects of migrant life that were unfamiliar to me.

Data collection: To date, 17 interviews have been done, all were transcribed, and eleven were translated. Ongoing translation of the remaining interviews is in progress with a translation consultant. Extensive field notes were written for each interview.

Data analysis: Data analysis is on-going, and constant comparative analysis has been used since data collection began in May 2012. To date, 12 of the 17 interviews are coded, and the rest are in process. For the 12 interviews that are coded, I have written numerous memos with critical awareness of constructivism and my role in the analysis (and interpretation) of the data. I have written memos to capture my own reflexive thoughts, to develop interpretations of the data, and also interaction with the data as I employ Grounded Theory analytic strategies. I have also utilized Situational Analysis and mapping strategies and written memos based on what I have learned from these additional analytic tools.

2. Significant results

Currently, it appears that three main categories are emerging from the data. The first two categories are closely related to one another and constitute part of a process of sexual risk identification, evaluation and response that migrant women engage in. First, women perceive threats to their sexual health [including violence/abuse, cheating, physical distance between partners, partner deception, partner's history of a sexually transmitted infection (STI), and partner's alcohol/drug use], and then they respond to these threats in two ways: via cognitive-emotional responses (defined below) and via action responses. Both of these response types are ways in which migrant farmworker women utilize various types of resources for self-protection, self-preservation, and coping. Cognitive-emotional responses include giving explanations, examining options, re-evaluating the relationship, following rules, making decisions, and feeling sadness/regret. The scale of women's engagement in these cognitive-emotional responses is influenced by three interdependent elements that they prioritize most in life: their ability to work, their children, and the existence of financial necessity. The second way in which women respond to threats is via action responses. Action responses include fighting back, calling for help, making a report, leaving him, giving an order/making a request, going to the clinic, and giving up. The scale of women's involvement in these action responses is influenced by the severity of the perceived threat as well as the woman's ability to access her own internal reserves, to tap into external resources, and to harness power.

The third category is about women's reasons for and benefits of male partnership. Migrant women's desire to respond to sexual risks within a partnership is very much related to the reasons why she entered into the relationship, the reasons why she chooses to stay in the relationship, and the benefits she receives as a result of the relationship. These reasons and benefits include economic necessity, obligation, companionship, protection, instrumental support, documentation, and job support/training. Among migrant farmworker women of Mexican descent, entering into a long-term partnership with a man at a young age is culturally expected.

With the migration process, some women appear to exercise a kind of newfound independence and utilize relationships as a strategy to meet their needs.

3. Key outcomes or other achievements

The key outcome of this research is developing at this stage of the study process and it involves a deepened understanding of the migrant women of my sample. In particular, it focuses on how the migrant women of my sample draw upon an internal logic that is unique to their situations in order to negotiate relationships and employ self-protective factors. Understanding how the migrant women think, reason, and negotiate on behalf of their own best interests (as defined by them) is extremely significant to nursing and public health. Deeper insight into and expanded knowledge of the cognitive-emotional and action-oriented responses of farmworker women to perceived threats to their sexual health will equip clinicians and program planners alike as they seek to develop cultural- and situation-specific interventions that are appropriate, appealing, and effective to decrease sexual risk in this vulnerable group.

In addition, my work with community members at my study site has been successful. I have a CAB that is invested in this work and is eager to assist me in disseminating the final results as well as utilizing them in a future project. In April 2013, I gave a presentation on my utilization of Community-Based Participatory Research in a symposium at the Western Institute of Nursing, which was well received. Many members of the audience engaged with me during the question and answer session after my talk and I was able to answer their multiple questions with an increased depth of insight. I also stayed afterwards to speak with students and researchers who were interested in my work, including the study topic, the sample population, and my methodological approach (CGT).

4. On-going work and expected dissertation completion timeline

Over the next school year (2013-2014) I plan to continue data analysis: working to develop the preliminary categories and using analytic techniques to dig into the data and explore the meanings of experiences of the women in my sample. In particular, I aim to understand women's perspectives about sexual health and perceived risks. This will help reveal areas where there might be gaps in the data, which will help me tailor my theoretical sampling techniques based on CGT methodology. This, in turn, will sharpen the foci of my future interviews. In Fall 2013, I plan to present the preliminary categories, with their properties and dimensions, to the members of my dissertation committee and my CAB. I will identify areas where I think there are gaps and where the categories need to be further developed. I will then ask my committee and the CAB to help me identify any additional gaps that should be filled in with theoretical sampling, and I will work with Dr. Heilemann to fashion a semi-structured interview guide with questions tailored to fill these gaps. Then, also in Fall 2013, I plan to recruit additional participants based on the methodology of CGT, which seeks to have theoretical saturation of categories. I predict this will be an additional three to six participants, depending on the need for appropriate data to saturate the categories. I will use theoretical sampling to check, qualify, and elaborate the boundaries of the preliminary categories, and to understand the relationships between categories.¹

Next, in Winter 2014, I will analyze this additional data, and integrate it into the final data analysis. I will meet weekly with Dr. Heilemann to review the final categories, and to use the data to understand how the categories are related to one another for the formation of a grounded theory. Subsequent meetings with the CAB will allow member checking of the categories I have developed and the relationships that link the categories in the final analysis. Theoretical findings from the data that will be shared with the CAB will be abstracted, edited and refined to protect anonymity of participants and preserve confidentiality. I will continue developing relationships with the CAB and other community members. I will then begin refining and sorting memos, and putting together the final written dissertation.

Finally, in Spring 2014, I will meet individually with each member of my committee, complete writing the papers for my dissertation, give them to my committee for review, and complete my final defense. This will take the form of an introductory and conclusion document plus three papers for submission to nursing and/or health care journals.

¹ Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.