

Culture is infused in all



“I believe culture counts. Culture is infused in all of our beings influencing how we think, feel, and behave. My research has evolved into a mental health disparities focus. I am interested in issues of assessment validity, with a focus on cognitive assessment, for different cultural groups.”

Story by [Nora Chavez](#), NM CARES Health Disparities Center

Steven P. Verney, PhD, is the Director of the NM CARES HD Research Core, and Associate Professor and Associate Chair for Graduate Education in the Department of Psychology at UNM. An Alaska Native (Tsimshain), he is an accomplished and well-respected Native American faculty member who has a history of collaboration with faculty in the Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, and Center for Alcoholism Substance Abuse and Addictions.

As the Director for the Research Core of the 5-year NCMHD-funded New Mexico Center for the Advancement for Research and Engagement on Health Disparities (NM CARES HD), he has focused his center work on providing scientific leadership and support for the five cores that makeup the center. The mission of this core is to support the Center researchers and community investigators and their collaborators in performing high quality research on translation and health disparities in the minority populations in New Mexico. “The vision,” says Dr. Verney, “is to build a critical mass of independent investigators, working together to establish a sustainable center of excellence for studying and addressing health disparities.”

“Differences in assessment validity add to the health and mental health disparities seen in the U.S.,” says Dr. Verney. “My research is centered on information processing efficiency and its application to clinical psychology. I use information processing and psychophysiological methods such as pupillary dilation response and eye-tracking measures to investigate clinical applications including culture-fair cognitive assessment, schizophrenia, alcohol use disorders, FASD, and vascular cognitive impairment.”

His longer-term research goals are to continue to research areas of cognitive psychophysiology, to investigate normal and pathological cognitive functioning and cultural issues in mental health disparities.

Dr. Verney’s research has focused on the role of culture in cognition and assessment and in cognitive deficits and psychopathology associated with aging. He continues to investigate culture-fair methods of assessment for ethnic and minority populations. He is a co-investigator and the Project Lead on an NHLBI-funded project, the Strong Heart Stroke Study, investigating stroke in older American Indians, the population with the highest rate of stroke in US.

Dr. Verney teaches undergraduate courses in Cross-Cultural Psychology and Abnormal Behavior and a graduate course in Diversity/Multicultural Issues in Clinical Psychology to the clinical psychology doctoral students. He recently received the 2007-2008 Outstanding Faculty of Color Award, awarded by the Project for Peer Mentoring Graduate Students of Color to faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, mentoring, and service.

For more information about the NM CARES Health Disparities Center, our Speaker Series please contact Miria Kano at mkano@salud.unm.edu, at 505-272-3876, or check out the links below.

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