

Fast-Tracking Community Academic Partnerships: Is It Possible?

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BACKGROUND

- The Environment, Leiomyomas, Latinas, and Adiposity Study (ELLAS) is an NIH-funded prospective cohort study of reproductive age Latinas/x based in Southeast Michigan.
- Due to an academic relocation for the principal investigator prior to the award being issued, **rapid integration, relationship building, and partnership formation** were required to ensure success of the project in Michigan.
- The academic PI identified and reached out to key trusted community partners including the leadership of a community health center with experience serving the Latino population in Detroit, as well as leaders of social support and community development organizations and advocates.
- A community advisory board (CAB) was formed and this proved to be the **foundation of success** for the study.



Fast-tracking a community academic partnership is possible when PIs, community partners, and the community-at-large share a commitment to transparency, shared decision-making, and the goals of the study.



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LESSONS LEARNED

- Fast-tracking a community academic partnership is **possible**.
- Transparency with community partners on why fast-tracking is necessary and a commitment to shared decision-making and input going forward is essential.
- Identifying early on how to make an established study win/win/win for the PI, the community partners, and community at large made a significant difference.
- All stakeholders envision and believe ELLAS will function as a foundation and catalyst for future studies on the health of reproductive age Latinas/x.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- While there are no guarantees, there is no need to abandon research where, in extenuating circumstances, there is little time to forge relationships with community partners. If approached with transparency and respect, these partnerships will be successful.

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