

## **Oral Health Training of Community Health Workers**

Community Health Workers (CHW) or Promotoras have been working in the barrios and colonias in Brownsville, Texas, for nearly 10 years. They are involved in promoting health of the people in the poor neighborhoods, barrios and colonias. While CHW have been trained in general health issues, they never have any training in oral health promotion. The aims of this study will be to: 1) Provide training on oral health promotion to Community Health Workers (CHW) or Promotoras, 2) CHW or Promotoras will then provide dental health education to their clientele in the communities where they work, 3) Assess the effectiveness of the training by comparing the oral health related knowledge of CHW before (pre-test) and after the training (Post-test), and 4) Investigate the impact of CHW or promotoras' oral health education activities by appropriate outcome measures. The study population will include nearly 70 promotoras working in around Brownsville. The Spanish training will include three modules: 1) introduction to oral health and oral hygiene, 2) applied oral health, and 3) provision of dental care. Baseline data on promotoras' oral health knowledge will be collected by a self-administered Spanish questionnaire. There will be three training sessions which will take place during the second, seventh and the final month of a twelve-month project. Data will be analyzed by descriptive, chi-square, and repeated measures ANOVA tests. Some of the outcome measures for the project include the number of: 1) people with dental problems encountered by promotoras, 2) referrals for further counseling to places such as WIC clinics, 3) Referral for dental care to BCHC and others, and 4) water samples analyzed for fluoride. Another evaluation measure would be the improvement in the oral health knowledge of promotoras who participated in the training, which will be measured by pre- and post-test questionnaires. The oral health training of the promotoras is an attempt to improve the oral health of the promotoras' clientele.

Sena Narendran, DDS, DDPH, MSc  
University of Texas Health Science Center  
Department of Dental Public Health  
Associate Professor