Nosotros Team

David O Garcia, PhD - Director, Nosotros / Director, Community Health and Outreach, Center for Health Disparities Research -
ACSM Clinical Exercise Physiologist
Assistant Professor, Health Promotion Sciences
Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona
University of Arizona Health Sciences

Luis Valdez, PhD, MPH – Associate Director, Postdoctoral Research Associate
Tucson native Luis A. Valdez, PhD, MPH is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center for Border Health Disparities. Dr. Valdez’s research uses a multilevel perspective and mixed methods approach to understand and address the systemic processes that perpetuate racial and ethnic health disparities in the American Southwest. Specifically, Dr. Valdez is interested in exploring how individual level experiences interact with macro-level neighborhood characteristics and social network relationships to influence alcohol and substance use related behaviors in Latino men. Dr. Valdez's work aims to inform structural and family-based interventions that aim to reduce the disproportionate impact of alcohol and substance use in underserved communities. Dr. Valdez is a co-instructor of the Border Health Service Learning Institute, an immersive course exploring health, migration, and economic development at the U.S.-Mexico border. Dr. Valdez also serves as the associate director of Nosotros: Comprometidos a su Salud, in which he focuses on developing improved and ethically responsible approaches to recruit and engage underserved communities in mutually beneficial health-related research.

Rosi Vogel – Senior Program Coordinator
Graduated from Universidad Anahuac in Mexico City from the College of Business Management and Economics. She obtained the title of Licenciado en Administración de Empresas. She is also pursuing her Master’s in Public Health with a concentration in Health Promotion. She coordinates the Nosotros team.
Kristin Morrill – Doctoral Student

Kristin is a Doctoral Student in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona (UA) in the Department of Nutritional Sciences. She obtained her Bachelors of Science degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology from the University of Illinois in Champaign. As a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fellow, Kristin works with Dr. David O. Garcia as her primary mentor under his research program “Nosotros Comprometidos a Su Salud – Committed to Your Health.” She has served as the lead study coordinator for a beverage intervention examining the effects of green tea/lemonade on cardiometabolic biomarkers for Hispanic adults. She also regularly volunteers for the Banner-UA Diabetes Prevention and Education Center as the lead cooking instructor, building upon her previous experience working at a recreational cooking school in Chicago. Kristin plans to utilize these skills to complete a dissertation project focused on improving diet quality by developing a culturally-sensitive cooking/nutrition intervention for Hispanic women.

Edgar Villavicencio – Graduate Research Assistant - Dec 7

Edgar is currently in his senior year at the University of Arizona. He currently works as an Undergraduate Research Assistant for the Nosotros team. He started getting familiar with Dr. Garcia’s work after having him as a professor for one of his public health classes last year. Edgar started volunteering here and there with a couple of recruitment efforts for the VERDE study and a couple of translation work for some questionnaires for a different study. Last summer, he was able to do an internship at Nosotros where he obtained experience doing qualitative data work analysis. Such experience included transcription work of a couple of the ANIMO Spanish interviews and qualitative coding of the same interviews through the NVivo 11 software.

Lupita Ballesteros – Undergraduate Research Assistant

Lupita is currently in her junior year at the University of Arizona majoring in Physiology with a minor in Public Health. Her ultimate career goal is to attend medical school to become a physician specializing in pediatric emergency medicine. Guadalupe is currently an Undergraduate Research Assistant for Nosotros, fulfilling her interests in public health and the underserved Latino community. She has also been a long-term volunteer at Clinica Amistad where she contributes to the care of low-income, uninsured individuals.
Brenda Picasso

Brenda graduated from the University of Arizona in 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and a minor in Spanish. She is currently doing the Certificate of Public Health online program through the University of Arizona with the future goal of obtaining a Masters of Public Health, with a focus on Health Promotions and Health Behaviors. Brenda is currently a volunteer with the Nosotros organization, where she assists the various projects being carried out by the organization.

Julio Loya

Julio is currently enrolled in the PhD in Nursing program at the University of Missouri Sinclair School of Nursing. He is also the senior nurse manager for the Trauma Progressive Care Unit and the Abdominal Transplant/Surgical Oncology units at Banner University Medical Center – Tucson campus. He has been a nurse for over 13 years, and his area of focus is developing behavioral-based interventions to engage Hispanic adults with diabetes type 2 in sustaining physical activity. Julio became involved with Nosotros as part of a research practicum in the summer of 2016, and has remained involved on a volunteer basis since the summer of 2017.

Benjamin Aceves

Benjamin is a PhD student in Health Behavior Health Promotion at the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona. He received his undergraduate degrees from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his master's degrees in Public Health/ Latin American Studies from San Diego State University. He has over 10 years experience working in public health ranging from community advocacy with County of San Diego to policy evaluation under Mexican federal government. He is currently involved in multiple research studies focusing on chronic disease prevention and self-management among Latino communities in both Mexico and the US. In the future, he would like to continue researching innovative strategies to reducing chronic disease health disease among Latino both at home and abroad. He thoroughly enjoy eating, hiking in Southern Arizona, exploring healthy alternatives to traditional dishes, playing soccer without getting injured, traveling, the beach/ocean.
David Campas

David graduated Spring 2018 with his Masters of Public Health in Health Behavior Health Promotion. He began working with “Nosotros” Comprometidos a su Salud” in April 2015. While working with Nosotros he has helped with recruitment for the ANIMO study and worked as an intervention coach during the ANIMO intervention. For his Masters Internship Project he worked to complete the ANIMO qualitative evaluation. He plans to continue his education, as his long-term goal is becoming a physical therapist. He hopes to use his background in public health to work with various populations and work towards innovative strategies in primary and secondary prevention for his patients. He hopes to continue to engage with Nosotros research group in the future, as he believes Nosotros has a bright future in impacting the Hispanic community. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with friends and traveling back to his hometown of Douglas to visit his family.