



Farmworker Association of Florida
La Asociación Campesina de Florida
Asosiyasyon Travayè Latè nan Florid

A Rural State of Mind: Addressing Mental, Physical, and Economic Health of Farm Communities in Florida

Antonio Tovar-Aguilar, PhD

Gülcan Önel, PhD

Jeanne-Marie R. Stacciarini, RN, PhD, FAAN

IRL Team Florida



Agenda

1. Presentations (Bingo!)
2. Introduction
3. Research Questions
4. The Culture of Health
5. CBPR – Community Engagement
6. Mythology and Logic Model
7. Break (10 minutes)
8. Grade your Mental Health (Practice)
9. Social Network Analysis

From left to right: Jeanne-Marie Stacciarini, Antonio Tovar-Aguilar, and Gülcan Önel

INTRODUCTION

Different populations, different psycho-social and economic issues

FARMWORKERS (HISPANICS AND HAITIANS):

- Over 90% of farmworkers in Florida are **immigrants**, more than half of which lack proper documentation to work legally
- **Socio-economic factors**, cross-cultural, ethnic differences (Hispanic vs Haitians), acculturation, low levels of education, social isolation, institutional racism, diminished employment opportunities, and fear of deportation

SMALL FARMERS:

- **Economic stressors** such as rising costs, unpredictability of crop prices, heightened potential for financial losses, and globalized competition.
- **Mental health issues** such as [increased suicide rates](#) and a large-scale [opioid crisis](#)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Rural well-being systems are made up of **mental well-being**, **physical well-being** and **socio-economic well-being** components.

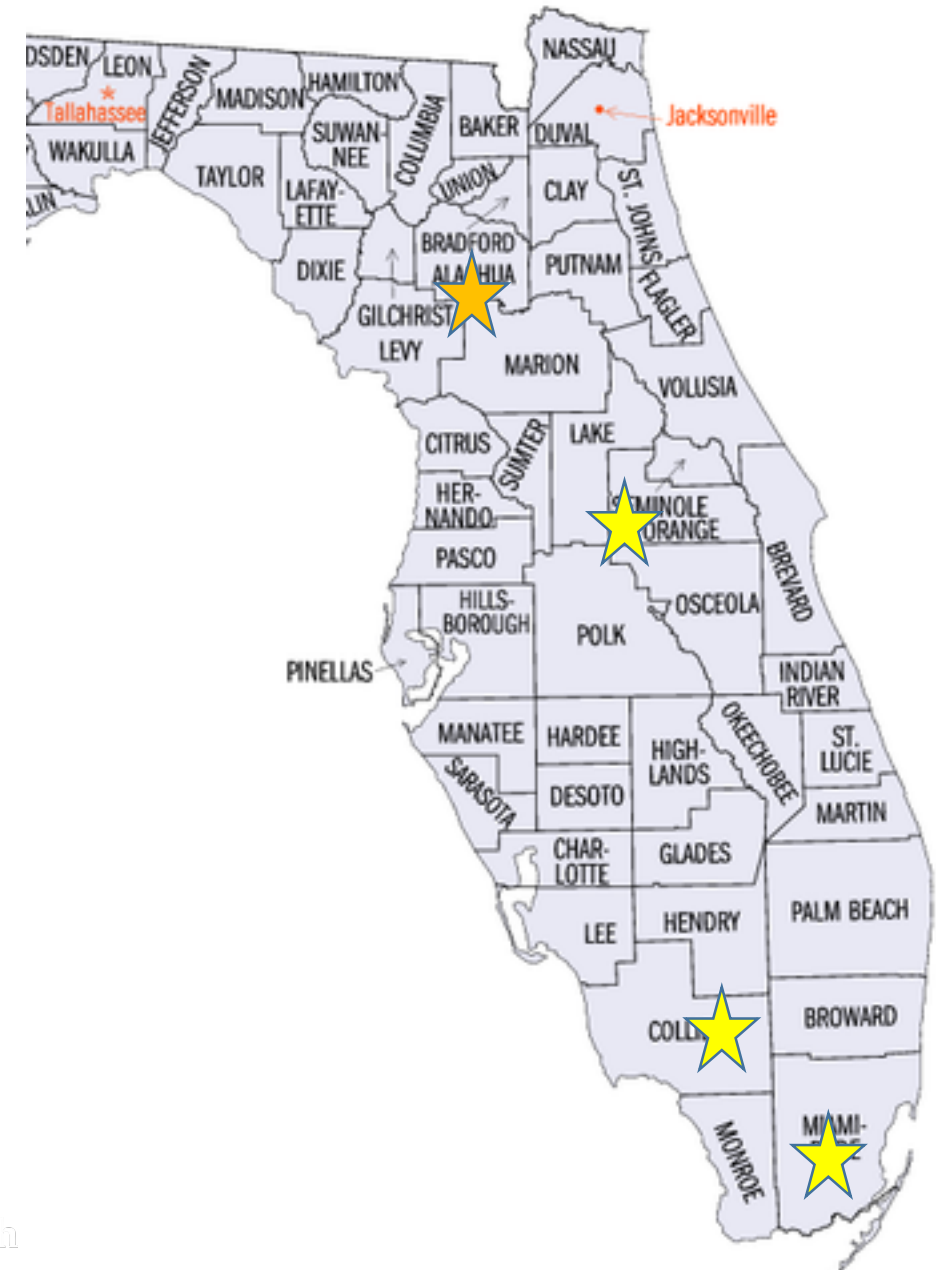
- 1) To what extent do key indicators of social isolation affect mental and physical well-being of small-scale growers/farmers and farmworkers?
- 2) To what extent are mental well-being and physical well-being associated with economic outcomes (e.g., productivity and earnings)?
- 3) Based on the estimated associations, what are potentially impactful points of intervention that could improve rural well-being of Florida farm communities.

CULTURE OF HEALTH FRAMEWORK

- 1) make well-being a common cause by **cultivating a sense of community and connectedness** between farmers and farmworkers.
- 2) foster **cross-sector and cross-discipline collaboration** by bringing agricultural community leaders, advocates for farmers and farmworkers, and researchers together.
- 3) strengthen rural health systems by integrating the social services and **community partnerships**.

LOCATIONS OF CAB MEMBERS AND RESEARCHERS

From North to South	Apopka (FWAF Main office)	Immokalee	Homestead (Piloting location)
CAB Members	5 Hispanic 3 Haitian	2 Hispanic 1 Haitian	1 Haitian
Total Population	>51,000	>17,000	>61,000
Ratio of Hispanic Population	>15%	>75%	>62%
Ratio of Haitian Population	>5%	>10%	>5%
Percent of Total Population Under Poverty Line	13%	55%	29%



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: FIRST CAB MEETING WITH FARMWORKERS (MARCH 1ST, 2019)



Farmworker Association of Florida
La Asociación Campesina de Florida
Asosiyasyon Travayè Latè nan Florid

- **Attendees:** 5 Haitian members (3 males & 2 females from 3 communities), and 7 Hispanic members (2 males & 5 females from 2 communities)
- **Meeting format:** At FWAF's Apopka, FL office with live Zoom connection.
- **Building Trust:** Two separate, same-day meetings with each group to maximize within-group dialogue. Pre-approved IRB.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: FIRST CAB MEETING WITH FARMWORKERS (MARCH 1ST, 2019)

Haitian members

Culture and values: Welcoming, respectful and expecting respect in return, hard-working, family-oriented (worry about children's future), mostly Christians.

Immigration Concerns:

- **“Old migration”** (green card, “Clinton visa”) versus **“new migration”** (TPS, undocumented status),
- new **ICE-local police partnerships** (17 of 67 FL counties),
- **deportations**,
- end of **TPS status** and mess exodus to Canada,
- **separated families**.

Perceptions of mental well-being: **Strong stigma** around “mental health”.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: FIRST CAB MEETING WITH FARMWORKERS (MARCH 1ST, 2019)

Hispanic members

Culture and values: Similar core values to those reported by Haitian members. Catholic, Christian, or not religious.

Immigration Concerns:

- Growing number of **Central American new-comers**,
- Increasing number of **H-2A guest workers**,
- Increasing **local police-ICE partnerships**,
- **Deportations**,
- **Separated families** due to mixed legal status

Perceptions of mental well-being: Mental health is **stigmatized** (but to a lesser extent compared to Haitians).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: FIRST MEETING WITH FLORIDA FARM BUREAU (FEBRUARY 26TH, 2019)

Grower Representatives

Culture and values: Strong sense of national pride, conservative protestant values, value of land and labor.

Immigration Concerns:

- Labor Shortage,
- Cost of H-2A guest workers,
- Implementation of E-verify,
- Demographic pressure,

Perceptions of mental well-being: Mental health is stigmatized, growers do not want to talk about the issue because they will look weak.

MAIN ISSUES RAISED AMONG HAITIAN CAB MEMBERS

- **Legal status and family separations**
- **Racism** – Experiences of racism from Hispanics, especially those who own/manage farms and businesses. *“Economic tribalism”*.
- **Language barriers** – Lack of English or Spanish. Difficulty engaging with local Hispanic communities.
- **Disenfranchisement** – Feelings of isolation and helplessness.

MAIN ISSUES RAISED AMONG HISPANIC CAB MEMBERS

- **Legal status and family separations**
- **Job displacement** – Domestic workers are ageing (been in US for more than 10 years), and growers are increasingly employing young and strong H-2A workers.
- **Housing** – Federally-mandated housing requirements for H-2A workers drive rental rates up for local workers. However, housing conditions continue to stay poor.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: FLORIDA FARM BUREAU, FEBRUARY 26TH, 2019

- FFB has concerns about the extent of **substance abuse** issue among Florida farmers.
- **Suicide** among Florida farmers have been on the rise.
- Expected determinants of mental health issues among farmers: **Financial pressures** due to increasing input costs, downward pressure in crop prices due to international trade and competition, and uncertainty.

DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING THE METHODOLOGY

1. Study Design

**Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Research
Based on CBPR Principles**



Quantitative Phase:
Structured Instruments



Qualitative Phase:
Advisory Boards meetings &
Follow-up Interviews

DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING THE METHODOLOGY

2. Recruitment: Small growers will be randomly selected FFB membership. Farmworkers will be recruited random geographic sample. Target sample size: 50 Small farmers, and 160 farmworkers (Hispanics and Haitians).

3. Measures / Questionnaires:

Two modules: 1) *physical well-being (self-reported measures adopted from National Agricultural Workers Survey [NAWS]), and mental well-being (PHQ-9 Depression, GAD-7 Anxiety, PROMIS Social Isolation); 2) *demographic and economic background; 3) Social Network Analysis**

4. Analysis: Quantitative data: Descriptive statistics, associations, Two-Stage Least Squares (IVs and random sampling issues). Qualitative Data will be analyzed using QSR NVivo.

BREAK!!!



Measuring Mental Health Isolation

Clinical Evaluation Isolation

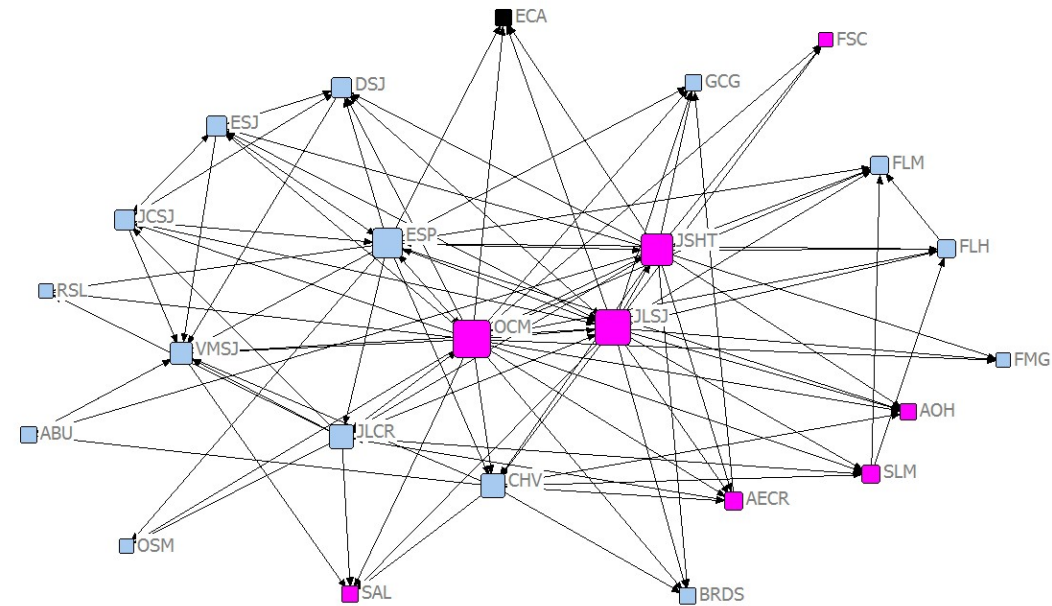
PROMIS Item Bank v2.0 - Social Isolation

Social Isolation – Short Form 8a

Please respond to each item by marking one box per row.

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
UCLA1192	I feel left out.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
UCLA1303	I feel that people barely know me.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
UCLA1442	I feel isolated from others	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
UCLA1892	I feel that people are around me but not with me	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Ins-CaPS1	I feel isolated even when I am not alone ..	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Social Network Analysis



Mental Health

Depresion

PHQ9_HaitianCreole.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Reader DC

File Edit View Window Help

Home Tools PHQ9_HaitianCreole...

1 / 1

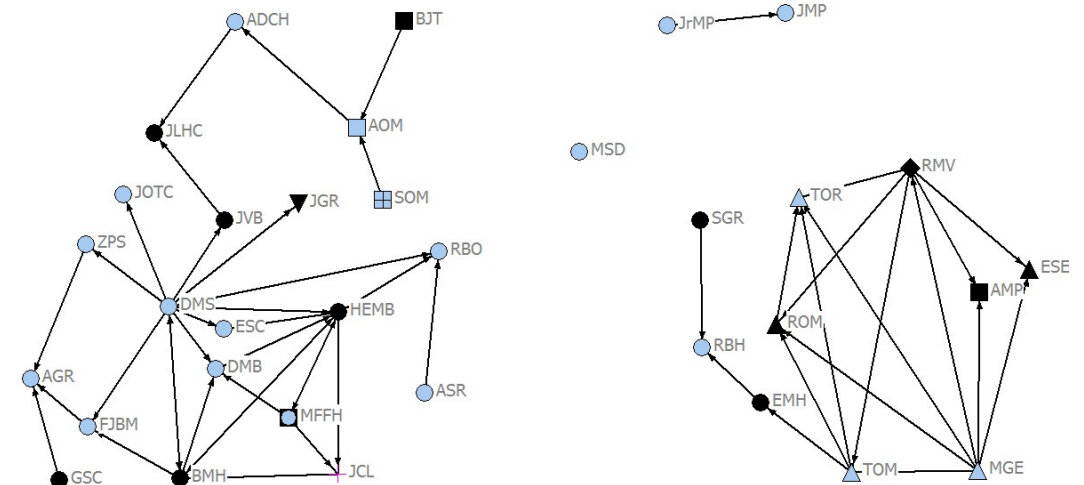
Share

KESYONÈ SOU SANTE PASYAN-9 (PHQ-9)

Pandan dènye e semèn pase yo, konbyen fwa nenpòt nan pwoblèm ki anba la yo te annwiye w?
(Itilize "✓" pou endike repons ou)

	Pa ditou	Plizyè Jou	Plis pase matyè jou yo	Prèske chak jou
1. Pa prèske enterese oswa pran plezi pou fè okenn aktivite	0	1	2	3
2. Santi w kagou, deprime, oswa pèdi espwa	0	1	2	3
3. Genyen difikilte pou dòmi oswa rete dòmi, oswa ou dòmi twòp	0	1	2	3
4. Santi w fatige oswa pa genyen anpil enèji	0	1	2	3
5. Pa genyen apeti oswa manje twòp	0	1	2	3

Social Network Analysis



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING THE METHODOLOGY

5. Potential threats to the validity of conclusions:

- Random sampling is difficult, threatening statistical validity of our results
- Culturally appropriate translation go beyond linguistic diversity
- Community Advisory Board consists of very diverse members with conflicting belief systems and interests.

6. Mitigating risks associated with mental health interviews:

- An emergency protocol for study participants who exhibit signs of mental disorders.
- Expanded partnerships with other community and faith-based organizations, and public health care providers.

Intervention

Social Solutions

- **Capacity building**
 - Race relations
 - Linguistic training
- **Join mobilizations**
- **Farmer mental health bill (HB2671 Washington State)**

Infrastructural Solutions

- **Mental Health Services**
- **Safe neutral spaces**
 - No more soccer ➡ domino
 - Cultural Centers
- **Multilingual and cultural competent help line**

QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK

1. Racial sensitivities: As mentioned above, there are some racial and ethnic tensions between Hispanic and Haitian farmworker communities. What should we pay attention to/be careful about when working with such interracial communities who may feel *resentment* toward each other? How do we maintain an inclusive, large Community Advisory Board made up of all racial and ethnic groups?
2. Conflicting interests: Farmers and farmworkers usually have competing policy interests and sensitivities around them. How can we use IRL research results to bring employers (farmers) and employees (farmworkers) together around the common goal of improving health and well-being?

FINAL COMMENTS?

