

**Curriculum Vitae
University of Miami**

Leah Marlene Varga
l.varga@umiami.edu
leahmarly@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

- Present** **Doctoral Candidate, Medical Sociology**
University of Miami
- 2003** **Master of Arts, Sociology**
University of Miami
*Thesis: Disinfection of injection site among new and long term injectors:
Prevalence and Predictors of Risk*
- 1994** **Bachelor of Arts, Psychology**
University of Miami, Summa Cum Laude

AWARDS

University of Miami Fellow 2005-2008

RESEARCH

University of Miami, Department of Medicine, Infectious Diseases Clinical Research Unit *with Allan Rodriguez, M.D. and Lisa Metsch, Ph.D.*

February 2007- present

Coordinator

Retaining HIV positive patients in medical care

ENHANCE-Enabling Haitians Access Needed Care- A Targeted Peer Support Model Development and Evaluation for Caribbeans Living with HIV/AIDS

Direct and manage research activities and operations of HRSA funded grant. Supervision of research staff; coordinating and supervising recruitment and data collection of all study participants; monitor ongoing performance of follow ups; monitor progress and adherence to protocol; prepare reports for meetings; maintain project logs, records, data, and quality assurance; medical record abstractions and reporting. Initiate and participate in preparation of grant applications and professional publications.

Princeton University, Department of Sociology *with Alejandro Portes, Ph.D.*

August 2007- present

Immigrants and Health Care Systems

Administering qualitative interviews, focus groups, and field observations of health care workers in clinics and hospital settings.

Nova Southeastern University, College of Osteopathic Medicine *with Isa Fernandez, Ph.D.*

March 2005-February 2007

Senior Research Associate

Project Director: Impact of Drugs, Sex and Culture Among Hispanic Men, Social Network HIV Prevention Intervention

Interviewer: Identity Development of Gay/Bisexual Questioning Male Youth

Direct and manage research activities and staff on two HIV prevention federal grants (NIDA and NIMH). Duties include but not limited to: Supervision and hiring of research staff; coordinating and supervising recruitment and data collection of all study participants; monitor ongoing performance of both studies; questionnaire development and construction; monitor progress and adherence to protocol; prepare reports for meetings; maintain project logs, records, data, and quality assurance; complete all IRB reports, intervention development, quantitative interviewing, qualitative interviewing and coding. Provide cultural competency in Hispanic issues, assist with translation of all research materials from English to Spanish and Spanish to English, stay current with health and cultural topics related to Hispanics.

Training and Liaison:

Train project staff in administration of data collection instruments and study protocol. Train staff in intervention implementation. Coordinate and schedule staff for certified trainings and workshops. Liaison between the university and the Florida Department of Health, community based organizations and other health clinics.

Scientific and Technical Writer:

Assist with analysis and interpretation of findings, writing of scholarly manuscripts. Preparation of technical reports, legal documents, grant applications, intervention manuals, and presentation of findings at national and international conferences. Conducting library searches.

**University of Miami Department of Epidemiology and Public Health with Isa Fernandez, Ph.D.
Oct 2000-March 2005**

Senior Research Associate

Project Director, Project Options and Impact of Drugs, Sex and Culture Among Hispanic Men, Jan 2002-March 2005

Direct and manage research activities and staff on two HIV prevention federal grants (NIDA and NIMH). Duties include but not limited to: Supervision and hiring of research staff; coordinating and supervising recruitment and data collection of all study participants; monitor ongoing performance of both studies; monitor HIV testing and result dissemination activities; questionnaire development and construction; monitor progress and adherence to protocol; prepare reports for meetings; maintain project logs, records, data, and quality assurance; complete all IRB reports. Provide cultural competency in Hispanic issues, assist with translation of all research materials from English to Spanish and Spanish to English, stay current with health and cultural topics related to Hispanics.

Training and Liaison:

Train project staff in administration of data collection instruments and study protocol. Train staff in biological specimen collection and handling. Coordinate and schedule staff for certified trainings and workshops.

Liaison between the university and the Florida Department of Health, community based organizations and other health clinics.

Scientific and Technical Writer:

Assist with analysis and interpretation of findings, writing of scholarly manuscripts. Preparation of technical reports, legal documents, grant applications, intervention manuals, and presentation of findings at national and international conferences. Conducting library searches.

Project Director, Project Shield, Oct 2000- Mar 2003

Direct research on HRSA funded grant. Supervision of research staff, recruitment and retainment of study participants, administration of standardized HIV prevention intervention, collection of longitudinal data, and tracking of participants, collection and shipment of urine samples for STD testing, monitor STD rates and treatment rates; liaison between the university and community based organizations and health clinics; monitor progress and adherence to protocol; prepare reports for conference calls and meetings; maintain project logs, records, data, and quality assurance; complete IRB reports.

**University of Miami Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences with Isa Fernandez, Ph.D.
Jan 2000- Oct 2000**

Research Associate

Assistant Coordinator for Project Shield and Lead Interviewer for Barriers Study

Assisted the coordinator with the management of day to day activities for Project Shield (HRSA). Continued duties of: conducted ACASI assessments, recruited and screened participants, collected and shipped urine samples, conducted randomization and other research related duties; maintained records and logs for all study participants, prepared reports for weekly meetings and conference calls. Served as lead interviewer on Barriers Study (CDC): approached, screened, and interviewed Hispanic men in field settings.

**University of Miami Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences with Isa Fernandez, Ph.D.
Sep. 1999-Dec. 1999**

Research Associate

Project Shield and Barriers Study

Project Shield (HRSA)- HIV prevention study for high risk youth involved recruitment and retaining of participants from health clinics and community based organizations, collection and shipping of urine samples, conducting 4 hour intervention with youth.

Barriers Study (CDC)- Recruiting and interviewing Hispanic men to assess barriers to HIV testing.

University of Miami Department of Sociology with Dale Chitwood, Ph.D.

May 1997-Sep. 1999

Research Associate

New Injectors Project

Served as lead interviewer on NIDA funded study. Interviewed injection drug users on drug use, sexual and criminal activity, victimization, and locator information using structured questionnaire. Day to day coordinator of assessment activities which included: supervised interviewers and outreach staff, coded and edited questionnaires, conducted pre-HIV instruction and education with subjects, maintained quality control over data, conducted lab urinalysis of subjects.

University of Miami Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences with Center for Family Studies

Jan. 1997-May 1997

Research Assistant

Latinas Project

Recruited and assessed adolescent girls at high risk for substance abuse and gang related activities and their mothers in low socioeconomic East Little Havana.

University of Miami Department of Psychology with Michael Antoni, Ph.D. and Charles Carver, Ph.D.
1995-1997

Research Assistant

Coping and Recovery Project, Phase II

Recruitment of women with breast cancer for a National Cancer Institute sponsored project.

University of Miami Department of Psychology with Michael Antoni, Ph.D. and Charles Carver, Ph.D.
1994-1997

Research Assistant

Coping and Recovery Project

American Cancer Society sponsored study; in charge of recruitment, interviews and follow-up, scheduling and distributing incentives to breast cancer patients in health clinics and at private offices; screening patients for depression or determining need for psychological intervention; accessing patient results and records data entry. Interviews conducted in English and Spanish.

University of Miami Department of Psychology with Michael Antoni, Ph.D.
1992-1995

Research Assistant

HPV Study

Recruitment and psychological interviewing of African-American, HIV+ women who are high risk for cervical cancer.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Tolou-Shams, M. , Brown, L.K., Gordon, G., Fernandez, M.I, **Project SHIELD Study Group**. (2007). Arrest history as an indicator of adolescent/young adult substance use and HIV risk. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 88(1), 87-90.

Fernandez, M.I., Warren, J.C., **Varga, L.M.**, Prado G., Hernandez, N., Bowen G.S. (2007). Cruising in Cyber Space: Comparing Internet Chat Room versus Community Venues for Recruiting Hispanic Men Who Have Sex with Men to Participate in Prevention Studies. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, 6(2).

Varga, L.M., Chitwood, D.D., & Fernandez, M.I. (2006). Factors associated with skin cleaning prior to injection among drug users. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 36(4), 1015-1030.

Fernandez, M.I.; Perrino, T.; Collazo, J.B.; **Varga, L.M.**; Marsh, D.; Bowen G.S. (2005) Surfing New Territory: Club drug use and risky sex among Hispanic MSM recruited on the Internet. *Journal of Urban Health*, 82, i79-i88.

Fernandez, M.I.; Bowen, G.S.; **Varga, L.M.**; Collazo, J.B.; Perrino, T. (2005) High Rates of Club Drug Use and Risky Sexual practices Among Hispanic Men Who Have Sex With Men in Miami, Florida. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 40, 1347-1362 .

Fernandez, M.I.; **Varga, L.M.**; Perrino, T.; Collazo, J.B.; Subiaul, F.; Rehbein, A.; Torres, H.; Castro, M.; Bowen, G.S. (2004) The Internet as recruitment tool for HIV studies: Viable strategy for reaching at risk Hispanic MSM in Miami? *AIDS Care*, 16(8), 1-11.

Fernández, M.I.; Collazo, J.; Hernández, N.; Bowen, G.S.; **Varga, L.M.**; Kibort Vila, C.; Arheart, K.L.; Perrino, T. (2004) Predictors of HIV Risk Among Hispanic Farm Workers in South Florida: Women Are At Higher Risk Than Men. *AIDS and Behavior*, 8(2), 165-174.

Fernández, M.I.; Collazo, J.; Perrino, T.; Bowen, G.S.; Arheart, K.; **Varga, L.M.** (2004) Predictors of HIV testing among seasonal farmworkers in South Florida. *Journal of Rural Health*. 21 (1), 56-63.

Fernandez M.I., Perrino T., Bowen G.S., Royal S., **Varga L.** (2003) Repeat HIV Testing Among Hispanic Men who Have Sex With Men-A Sign of Risk, Prevention, or Reassurance? *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 15, Supplement A, 105-116.

Presentations:

Rodriguez, A., **Varga, L.M.**, Saint-Jean, G., Kolber, M., Metsch L. (2007). Unique challenges of hospitalized, newly diagnosed HIV/AIDS Haitians residing in the US. Poster presentation at 2007 CDC National HIV Prevention Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

Varga, L.M., Chitwood, D.D., & Fernandez, M.I. (2006) Factors associated with skin cleaning prior to injection among drug users. Round table presentation at 101st Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association; Montreal, Canada.

Fernández, M. I., Warren, J. C., **Varga, L. M.**, deFuentes, C. & Bowen, G. S. Health disparities in HIV: (2005) Using the Internet to find connections between club drug use and risky sexual behavior in Hispanic MSM. Paper presented at the 133rd Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association; Philadelphia, PA. December 10-14.

Fernandez, M.I.; Collazo, J.B.; **Varga, L.M.**; Bowen, G.S. (2004) High rates of risky sex and use of club drugs among Hispanic men who have sex with men in Miami, Florida, USA. XV International AIDS Conference; Bangkok, Thailand: Abstract WePeC6079.

Fernandez, M.I.; **Varga, L.M.**; Bowen, G.S.; Collazo, J.B.; Castro, M.; Perrino, T. (2004) Using the internet to recruit high risk Hispanic MSM to participate in research studies. XV International AIDS Conference; Bangkok, Thailand: Abstract ThPeC7577.

Fernandez, M.I.; Collazo, J.B.; Perrino, T.; **Varga, L.M.**; Torres, H.; Plaza, C.; Jauregui, L.; Rehbein, A.; Bowen, G.S.; Castro, M. (2003) Surfing New Territory- Working with Institutional Review Boards on Internet Based STD/HIV Prevention Research. Paper Presented at the Centers for Disease Prevention's STD/HIV Prevention and the Internet Workshop, Washington, D.C.

Bowen, G. S., Royal, S., Perrino, T. M., **Varga, L.**, & Fernández, M. I. (2002). Determinants of HIV in Hispanic men: risk perception and physician recommendation. Poster presented at the XIV International AIDS Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

Perrino, T. M., Fernández, M. I., Royal, S., **Varga, L.**, Bowen, G. S., & Mattson, T. R. (2002). Evidence of continued HIV risk behaviors among HIV positive, Hispanic men who have sex with men. Poster presented at the XIV International AIDS Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

Royal, S., Bowen, G. S., Perrino, T. M., **Varga, L.**, & Fernández, M. I. (2002). Repeat versus regular testing in Hispanic men who have sex with men. Poster presented at the XIV International AIDS Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

TRAINING

Preparing Future Faculty Summer Institute Howard University, June 2007.
Urban Ethnography Workshop Yale University, April 2008.

SERVICE

National Science Foundation, Student Mentor, Undergraduate Minority Students Summer Program, Summer 2007

Faculty Search Committee, Graduate Student Representative 2007-2008
Colloquia Committee, Graduate Student Representative 2006-2007
Graduate Senator, Department of Sociology 2005-2006
Graduate Student Association

Reviewer, Journal of Drug Issues, Special Issue: Substance Abuse and Religion 2008.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Sociological Association
Student Member:
 Medical Sociology
 Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

SPECIALIZATIONS

Medical Sociology
Race and Ethnic Relations
Interests: Social Construction of Health, Illness, and Disease; Disparities in Health, Health Care Access, Health Care Use, Definitions of Health; Ideologies and Health Policy

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Certified Florida Department of Health Pre and Post- Test HIV Counselor
Certified in Orasure Testing for HIV
Languages: English and Spanish