

Minority participants crucial to effective aging studies

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A new supplemental issue of [The Gerontologist](#) urges aging researchers to include representative samples of ethnically diverse populations in their work. The publication also identifies research priorities for moving the science of recruitment and retention forward, in addition to providing several strategies that scholars can employ in their work. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that non-white minorities will make up 42 percent of the country's 65-and-over population by 2050.

"The cultural-historical background and sociopolitical conditions of each diverse group poses unique challenges in developing successful [recruitment](#) and retention methods and strategies," stated Peggye Dilworth-Anderson, PhD, a former president of The Gerontological Society of America, in the issue's introduction. "This critical collection of articles demonstrates important theoretical and conceptual frameworks that seek to address the shortcomings of previous models of using diverse populations."

The journal also demonstrates that understanding key components of cultural distinctions — such as values and beliefs, community cohesion, and collective history — has proven to be instrumental in reaching out to these diverse groups.

Included are several reports that detail the costs of minority recruitment and retention, which can be used to provide a blueprint for future studies.

The issue concludes with a summary of four recommendations for furthering the inclusion of ethnically diverse populations in aging research. Authors Anna M. Nápoles, PhD, MPH, and Letha A. Chadiha, PhD, MSW, suggest that: investigators track and report enrollment rates stratified by race/ethnicity, related challenges, and solutions; investigators conduct nested studies of the effectiveness of recruitment or retention within other health research studies; funding opportunity announcements for primary data collection studies include a request for investigators to incorporate a nested study that compares the effectiveness of multiple methods of recruitment and/or retention, especially studies that include underrepresented groups; and funding agencies appropriate targeted funding to investigate specific methodologically challenging recruitment issues, e.g., identifying alternative incentives for recruiting groups that have been discriminated against or that are impoverished in longitudinal cohort studies that may have limited funding to pay monetary incentives to participants.

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

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