Spain/Cross-Cultural Fellowship in Neuropsychology: A Response to the Needs of the Houston Hispanic Community

Elsa Baena, PhD; Kevin Dat Vuong, MA; Jennifer M. Stinson, PhD, ABPP; Stephen R. McCauley, PhD; Michele K. York, PhD, ABPP; Adriana M. Strutt, PhD, ABPP

Department of Neurology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas

OBJECTIVE
To review the needs, goals, and outcomes of Baylor College of Medicine Spanish/Cross-Cultural Fellowship in Adult Neuropsychology.

BACKGROUND
Just as the U.S. becomes more diverse, the need for neuropsychological services for ethnic and linguistic minority individuals also becomes critical.
- Of the two million people living in Houston, the most diverse city in the U.S., 45% are Hispanic or Latinos1 and 37% speak a language other than English.2
- There is a shortage of neuropsychologists who can provide linguistic and culturally sensitive services nationwide.
- In 2016, membership of the Hispanic Neuropsychological Society listed 68 licensed neuropsychologists nationwide; two of these providers practice in the greater Houston area.
- Currently, five Spanish speaking providers are available in the area; however, patients report a 3-6 month waiting period.
- The paucity of Spanish speaking practitioners may in part reflect a lack of cross-cultural neuropsychological training opportunities and the challenges in recruitment of bilingual/ethnic minority providers at all levels of training.3,4,5
- In 2011, HNS listed 13 post-doctoral training sites with partial training in cross-cultural neuropsychology.
- Despite efforts to increase training opportunities and programs, only 16 post-doctoral programs offered partial training with Hispanic/Latinos and/or with a Spanish speaking supervisor/faculty in 2017.6
- None of the training sites indicated formalized training in Spanish Neuropsychology or were based in a Spanish specialty neuropsychology clinic.7

To increase cross-cultural training opportunities, BCM Cerebro (Spanish/Cross-Cultural Neuropsychology Outpatient Program) founded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship specializing in Spanish/Cross-Cultural Adult Neuropsychology in 2017.
- This fellowship is the first such training program with membership in the Association of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology (APP CN).

TRAINING OBJECTIVES & OPPORTUNITIES
The fellowship strives to teach new assessment techniques and highlights the influence of sociodemographic variables on Westernized neuropsychological practices for monolingual and bilingual Spanish-speakers, and non-English/Spanish speaking minorities.

This innovative and pioneering postdoctoral fellowship provides training experiences in clinical practice, educational experiences, and research applications/service-community outreach (see Table 1).

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<tr>
<th>Clinical Services</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Research/Service/Community Outreach</th>
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<td>70%</td>
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Activities
- Advanced training in assessment, diagnosis, and consultation grounded in evidence-based practices for a wide variety of neurological and psychiatric conditions
- Providing feedback sessions including treatment recommendations to patients, families/caregivers, and clinical team members
- Spanish documentation: diagnostic impression/summary and recommendations for patients and families
- Consultation services for the evaluation of diverse populations
- Participation in interdisciplinary conferences for deep brain stimulation, memory disorders, epilepsy, cancer, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
- Training/participation in extraprofessional procedures
- Bilingual/culturally sensitive supervision and tiered supervision

OUTCOMES & FUTURE DIRECTIONS
During the Fellowship’s inaugural training year, utilization of services for monolingual and bilingual Spanish speakers increased from two clinics to four clinics per month for a total of 46 patients.

Given the need of the Houston community, services were expanded following the six months of the Fellowship, serving 71 patients during this short period. Geographically, patients served by the fellow were mostly from North, Central, and South America (see Figure 1).

Services provided to other non-English speaking minorities included Arabic, Mandarin, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, and Indonesian speaking patients.
- The majority of patients were evaluated for differential diagnosis of dementia and related disorders (i.e., Mild Neurocognitive Disorder) and a new service was added to evaluate surgical candidacy of patients with epilepsy, tumors, and movement disorders (see Figure 1 and Table 2).
- Services provided through BCM Cerebro’s Fellowship will expand into the upcoming academic rotation (2019-2021).
  - Development of partnerships with community based programs are being examined in an attempt to increase services to other non-English speaking populations.

CONCLUSION

- Fellowships of this nature, which provide comprehensive experience in the designated specialty, are imperative in ensuring the trainer to independent practitioner pipeline becomes as diverse as the patients being served.
- This fellowship has served as a model for subsequent fellowships nationwide.
- Ultimately, the fellow, also eligible for board certification in Clinical Neuropsychology, will be able to practice independently given this academic and clinical experience founded on a model of cultural humility.7

REFERENCES