

Research Needs and Priorities for Ethnic Communities

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GOAL

To set priorities and ideas for researchers and programs that aim to improve traffic safety among ethnic communities.

INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the trends in traffic deaths from 1990 to 1994 suggested that all of the major ethnic groups were experiencing some benefits from current safety programs as indicated by a reduction in the proportion of alcohol related fatal crashes. At the same time, significant differences in the extent of the drinking and driving problem between ethnic groups were noted. These differences suggest that, in addition to making standard safety program culturally relevant for each ethnic group, it will be important to prioritize targets within ethnic groups to most efficiently use the resources available for traffic safety campaigns. This presentation summarizes research needs and program ideas from ethnic researchers who participated in February 1999 and May 1999 diversity meetings.

TOP RESEARCH NEEDS

Apply Culturally Competent Research Approaches

Develop and apply culturally competent and sound research approaches, both quantitative and qualitative methods, to gather useful data and to identify appropriate interventions:

- Experimental design;
- Use of focus groups, key informants;
- Research at the local level to ensure involvement by ethnic communities including social institutions and groups (i.e. churches, advocacy groups and centers);
 - Research findings to be used in partnership with ethnic groups and communities to improve traffic safety; and
 - Conduct epidemiologic and ethnographic studies.

Problem Area and Size: Current research and data collection efforts may not capture the needed information for developing ethnic specific traffic safety records and programs.

What We Don't Know: Traffic safety concerns among different ethnic communities on the local level.

Research Issues:

- What are these concerns and how are local statistics different from the national data?
- What kinds of research and intervention approaches are effective?
- Need to obtain culturally specific data.
- Need to sample groups who would otherwise not be included or identified in the sampling.
- Conduct face to face interviews which provide richer data than telephone surveys.
- Identify findings that can be generalized to more communities.
- Ensure support in developing research strategies for interventions based upon findings due to the partnership with ethnic groups in conducting the research.

Likelihood of Successful Research: Good chance if supported on the national level and carried out with support from ethnic researchers and communities.

Application of Research Results: Have a clearer picture of the traffic safety issues among ethnic communities and a better foundation for appropriate interventions.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: The data sets themselves could be neutral, the use of these ethnic specific data can be highly political, e.g., profiling by law enforcement, “DWB,” etc.

Develop On-Going Partnership in Research

The NHTSA needs to maintain a commitment to enlist the ethnic research community groups in full partnership in all research efforts.

Problem Area and Size: Continuous involvement from the ethnic community groups and a commitment from the NHTSA are preferable to periodic consultations or the lack of them from a few ethnic researchers.

What We Don’t Know: Will NHTSA be able to formalize their commitment to ethnic communities by allocating or getting resources to support these efforts.

Research Issues: How can ethnic communities and ethnic researchers in reality help the research efforts? What kinds of research efforts can be produced? What are the detailed contents of this partnership?

Likelihood of Successful Research: Good chance. NHTSA seems to be committed to the cause and there are many ethnic communities and individuals who are interested in improving traffic safety among ethnic and general communities.

Application of Research Results: On-going partnership with ethnic communities.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: Increased involvement from ethnic communities. Increase fiscal and logistic responsibilities for NHTSA.

Involve Ethnic Communities as Partners for Change

Understand and utilize “community” as a full partner for positive changes:

- Research the role and function of “community” in different ethnic groups and their implications for traffic safety;
- Mobilize community for lasting change; and
- Involve community as participants and solutions of any research and intervention efforts.

Problem Area and Size: Much has been said on the effectiveness of involvement of ethnic communities. The difficulties in getting involvement from ethnic communities are also recognized. Then, how will this gap be filled?

What We Don’t Know: What is a community? Who are the people in the community? Beyond the self-proclaimed community representatives, who are the real community leaders? How can community be part of the change to improve traffic safety?

Research Issue: Include more uses of ethnographic and qualitative research approaches to provide useful information.

Likelihood of Successful Research: By understanding, involving, and mobilizing ethnic communities, there is good chance for success.

Application of Research Results: Tap into the strengths and resources of different ethnic communities to improve traffic safety.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: In partnership with the ethnic communities, these studies are able to “look into,” but not “look at” the issues of traffic safety among and within ethnic communities. They generate data from, and preferably by, the people of the ethnic communities that can be used to improve the ethnic populations and the general community.

Include Ethnic Specific Data

Encourage studies to include and examine data in the following areas:

- Country of origin of the family (include the rationale—cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors shape attitudes and behaviors of traffic safety);
- U.S.- or foreign born; length of time living in the United States (issues of assimilation and acculturation, status of citizenship);
- Socioeconomic status: family income, employment status, education, etc.;

- Language of choice: English and/or other languages; monolingual or multilingual; and
- Place of residence: urban, suburban, rural, community characteristics, concentration of ethnic communities.

Problem Area and Size: Current data do not provide sufficient information on ethnic communities

What We Don't Know: Lack of sufficient information to develop ethnic specific data and interventions partly due to the difficulties in gaining access to ethnic communities and information from existing national studies.

Research Issue: What are the main contributing factors for traffic safety concerns among and within different ethnic groups.

Likelihood of Successful Research: Good chance if supported on the national level and carried out in partnership with ethnic researchers and communities

Application of Research Results: Have a clearer picture of the traffic safety issues among ethnic communities and a better foundation for appropriate interventions

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: The data sets themselves could be neutral, the use of these ethnic specific data can be highly political, e.g., profiling by law enforcement, "DWB," etc.

Improve Fatal Accident Reporting System Data

Include as a priority to identify ethnic specific categories for future data collection which may include the desegregation of the Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) data. Need to include more detailed information and data including

- Desegregate data of Asian/Pacific Islanders; use California data in order to get perspective for the rest of the country;
- Separate Puerto Rico from national data and have more Puertorican (island) specific studies;
- Age breakdown of children;
- Determine the time, location, and how far from home the crashes occurred;
- Ethnicity of passengers and drivers; and
- Types and results of injuries.

Problem Area and Size: Current data do not provide adequate details.

What We Don't Know: Insufficient data on different ethnic communities.

Research Issue: How to improve FARS to include and to provide the needed data.

Likelihood of Successful Research: To be determined.

Application of Research Results: Provide vital information for designing ethnic community specific and effective interventions.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: The data sets themselves could be neutral, the use of these ethnic specific data can be highly political, e.g., profiling by law enforcement, "DWB," etc.

Utilize Demonstration Projects and Evaluation Studies

Engage in demonstration projects and evaluation studies that verify the effectiveness of the proposed interventions and produce valid and reliable (scientific and practical) data regarding the program and problem addressed.

Problem Area and Size: The lack of accurate data and "tested" interventions lead to insufficient ethnic specific intervention on traffic safety issues. There is also a lack of available data from all levels and the assessment of existing interventions to determine success or limitations

What We Don't Know: Scope and size of the problems and the impact upon communities. What do ethnic communities want to do about these problems?

Research Issue: Test working hypotheses that are in partnership with or are generated from the local or ethnic communities and continue to build on the project findings.

Likelihood of Successful Research: These are service-based applied research projects. Good chance of success. They may however take several years to complete.

Application of Research Results: Identify and apply validated and reliable data and intervention approaches to improve traffic safety.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: It is a "learning from the field" approach. Ethnic communities collect traffic safety data while services are being provided to the populations. It is likely to gain support from the ethnic communities.

Study the Effects of Alcohol Marketing

Does alcohol marketing decrease traffic safety among ethnic groups and, if so, how can the ethnic communities and NHTSA work together to address the issues?

Problem Area and Size: Communities of color have increasingly been the targets for marketing by the alcohol industry. The number of ethnic communities who have reported alcoholic problems have been on the rise in recent years. Many children and youth from

these ethnic communities are environmentally at-risk for their high exposure to alcohol advertisements and the internalization of the “perceived” acceptance of alcohol use.

What We Don’t Know: How alcohol marketing targeted at ethnic populations/communities contributed to the traffic safety issues in ethnic communities?

Research Issue: Does alcohol marketing decrease traffic safety among ethnic communities and what can the ethnic communities and NHTSA do about that.

Likelihood of Successful Research: Good chance to determine the extent of associations. The ability to establish causality remains to be seen.

Application of Research Results: Develop counter measures including social marketing, legislative and policy changes at all levels, and other individual and community oriented interventions.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: It may seem to be a straightforward research question. It is also a highly political question in regard to the debate over users versus manufacturer responsibility, ethnic community targeted marketing, and the ethics of business and policy decisions.

Survey Prevention Efforts for Children and Youth

Investigate the existence and effectiveness of prevention efforts directed towards youth/children (pre-drivers and new drivers) within ethnic populations/communities.

Problem Area and Size: High incidence of new drivers in accidents; determine existing models of prevention for effectiveness and replication within ethnic communities and groups.

What We Don’t Know: Insufficient data on such efforts.

Research Issues: To identify the difference between/among pre- and new drivers and test the effectiveness of such models.

Likelihood of Successful Research: Good chance of support by ethnic groups/communities if efforts prove successful.

Application of Research Results: Generate greater participation in diverse communities; make traffic safety more of a priority for ethnic groups; create a stronger partnership.

Broader Issues, Political Factors, Etc.: Use this opportunity to highlight the success of community efforts in improving traffic safety among children and youth. Increase community involvement and provide support and encourage for future efforts.

SUMMARY

This paper outlines the culturally competent research needs and priorities on traffic safety issues among ethnic communities. The attainment of these identified priorities and needs demand commitments and cooperation from both the NHTSA and the ethnic communities.

Priority Area 1:	Apply Culturally Competent Research Approaches
Priority Area 2:	Develop On-going Partnership in Research
Priority Area 3:	Involve Ethnic Communities as Partners for Change
Priority Area 4:	Include Ethnic Specific Data
Priority Area 5:	Improve FARS Data
Priority Area 6:	Utilize Demonstration Projects and Evaluation Studies
Priority Area 7:	Study the Effects of Alcohol Marketing
Priority Area 8:	Survey Prevention Efforts for Children and Youth