

Janet Okamoto's Research Statement

My research interests concern social and cultural dimensions of health behaviors, including the study of systems. I am particularly interested in the use of social network methods and measures to better understand and further explore interpersonal relationships and their influence on health attitudes, norms and beliefs, decisions, and behaviors. Also, how the use of these measures can increase the effectiveness of health behavior interventions. A related area of interest is the role culture and acculturation play in health behaviors and interactions. This includes examining the effects of factors such as perceived discrimination and ethnic identity development on various health outcomes.

During my post-doctoral training at the National Cancer Institute, with the Science of Team Science group in the Behavioral Research Program in the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences, I used social network analysis to better understand and measure how research teams work together and to explore the impact of team science. This has become another research interest I am currently engaged in and plan to further pursue in the future. It has stemmed from my experience and expertise in program evaluation. Instead of evaluating health behavior interventions and programs, I examine the research enterprise and scientific investigators, but using many of the same methods. My larger research interests in this area include examination of how multi-level factors from the larger social-environmental context, social network structure and characteristics, group dynamics and attributes, and individual characteristics interact to influence complex health behaviors and the researchers who study them.

My research includes a diverse mix of topics, methodologies, and collaborators, but there are definite themes that help me to remain focused on the work that I am committed to. The main theme is the study of networks and behavior, particularly as it relates to health and well-being. A second prominent theme is assessment and evaluation. Much of this is related to my methodological expertise and experience, primarily social network analysis and survey design and methods. I have added an interest in qualitative methods and continue to learn and grow professionally in the area of mixed methods research. This has led to some expertise in content analysis, but from a more quantitative network analytic approach to this type of methodology. Finally, another theme in my work is understanding diverse and underserved populations and community-based studies and research. I have found working together with dedicated and highly motivated individuals and organizations to improve the health and well-being of their communities to be some of the most rewarding work of my career. There is always more to learn to do this work better, which is something that is a high priority for me for my personal and professional growth and development. These themes can be found throughout my work and are often influenced by my interest and curiosity in new methods and creative applications of familiar methods in new contexts.

My work often cross disciplinary lines and operates at the intersection of several different research areas. Coming from a network perspective, I also take a systems approach to my projects and studies. I have conducted research at various levels, from the study of individual adolescent substance use behaviors associated with perceptions of discrimination to evaluation of a network of health disparities researchers to a recently completed grant examining a community coalition working to enact smoke-free policies on Navajo Nation. As my research matures, I continuously strive to better integrate and understand the important interplay between these multiple levels of influence, such as network influences on individual behavior and policy influences on social network dynamics. I am committed to contributing to knowledge that addresses well-being from a relational and holistic perspective, ideally in

partnership with the communities and populations of study and that can leave behind tangible and positive products of the research in those communities.

My future research plans include completing the current NIH study I am a co-investigator on, of social media and electronic cigarette behavior and attitudes, in the next few years. I also plan to continue working with Somali and other refugee communities around access to care and health literacy by completing analyses of the data from my completed pilot project and disseminating the findings back to the community to develop future funding proposals that address the most pressing concerns and needs identified by this community. I will continue my work with my colleague, Dr. Leischow in the ASU College of Health Solutions, on the several projects we have ongoing, including the above-mentioned social media study. I have more immediate plans to apply for a new NIH funding opportunity announcement in February 2018 related to tobacco regulation that will be associated with the social media study. I will also further my work with tribal organizations on social network analysis to help assess capacity and needs related to health service delivery and chronic disease prevention. Other projects and funding proposals I have in development include: a co-investigator role on a R01 proposal for a social network intervention addressing healthy eating and physical activity in Hispanic and Somali communities using lay health workers identified through SNA (conducting feasibility test analysis now, proposal to be submitted for February 2018 NIH cycle), conducting a network survey of those working in tobacco control in Africa to map expertise and collaboration (waiting on IRB approval with implementation planned for Spring 2018), several team science-related network surveys (including a survey on research collaboration for the ASU College of Health Solutions, a Mayo Clinic team science assessment of translational science researchers, and a needs assessment and network survey of the Mayo Clinic Office of Health Disparities Community Advisory Board), and a co-investigator role on a tobacco regulatory science coordinating center grant proposal (U54 submitted and awaiting review).

I believe the themes of my research, networks and their relation to behavior and health, would contribute to the strengths of the Department of Kinesiology's new program in Health Promotion and Health Equity at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My experience with various quantitative methodologies and how they can be best utilized as effective tools in research will serve to provide students with the training and expertise needed to understand the multi-level factors that influence people's behavior and well-being.