Engaging the Community to Develop Recruitment Tools and Improve Diversity in Neuromodulation Research

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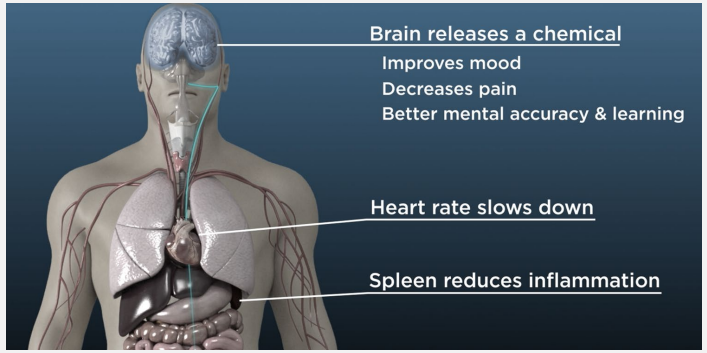
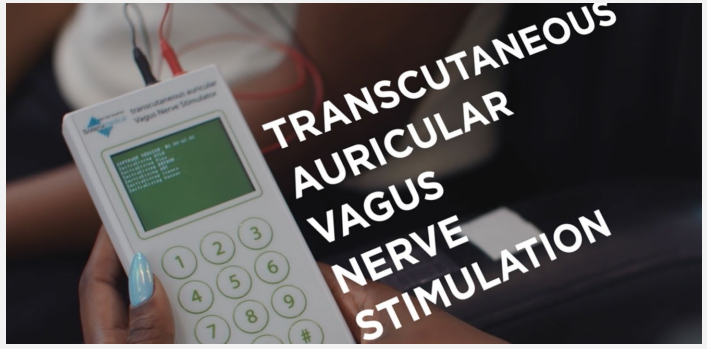
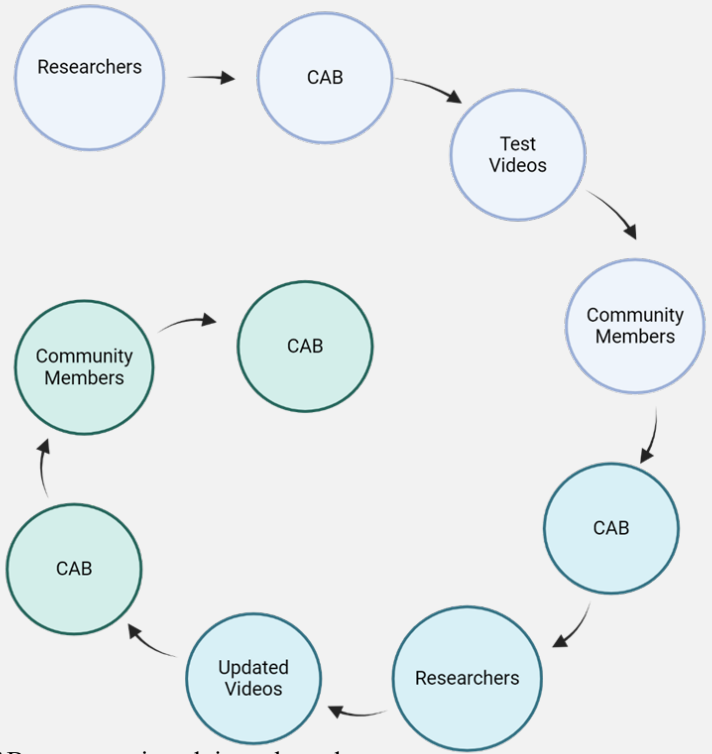
Background: Transcutaneous auricular vagus nerve stimulation (taVNS) shows promise for improving chronic pain management.[1] However, participation in neuromodulation research is notoriously poor for racial and ethnic minorities in the USA,[2] even though members of these groups are at higher risk for chronic pain.[3]



Aim: to produce culturally sensitive videos to effectively provide high value education on taVNS and specifically target African American (English speaking), Hispanic (Spanish speaking), and Haitian (Creole speaking) participants with chronic pain.



Methods: Using a generic qualitative design, and an iterative process, we solicited feedback from key stakeholders:

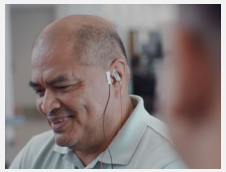


CAB=community advisory board

Conclusion: These videos provide the taVNS research field with a tool to enhance recruitment of racial and ethnic minority participants in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole languages.
The participatory research strategies used in this project may provide a valuable framework for developing and optimizing recruitment tools for pain.

Results: Based on feedback from the research panel interviews (n=10), three video segments in each language (9 videos in total) were produced:

1. Introduction and Mechanisms of Action
2. Risks and Research Regulation
3. What to Expect



Participants from the stakeholder panel representing African American (n=6), Hispanic (n=5), and Haitian (n=4) people with chronic pain provided feedback on the videos. Participants valued the aim, clarity, length, and content of the videos, as well as the purpose of research on taVNS within minority populations. Based on their feedback, the videos were edited provide more detailed information on the conditions for which vagus nerve stimulation is FDA approved, risks associated with taNVS, and why additional medical research is needed to gain FDA approval for pain management.

The videos are available at:

English | Spanish | Haitian Creole

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Advancing Pain Research with Community Involvement And Translational-studies