Research

I investigate issues related to eating behaviors and body image in women of diverse cultural backgrounds and varying developmental stages of life such as pregnancy and postpartum.

On a broader level, I work with a research lab called the Women's Health Project where we are investigating adaptations of interventions for binge eating in women.

Relation to W+GRA

My research relates to the Women + Girls Research Alliance because we are working towards improving knowledge of eating behaviors of understudied populations in order to inform treatment through research. The work we do in the Women's Health Project, and the work I am doing on overvaluation of shape and weight and eating behaviors during and after pregnancy can be disseminated to health care professionals so they may be more culturally sensitive to diverse populations. It directly relates to women's health and well-being.

Outcomes

In the eating disorders field it was traditionally thought that minority women didn't develop eating disorders at the same rate as Caucasian women, however this isn't the case. Binge eating is just as prevalent in Latina and African American Women however Latinas in particular are much less likely to seek treatment for disordered eating and when they do, health care providers are likely to misdiagnose symptoms because they are described and expressed differently.

I've seen directly how our work can benefit women and girls because we recently conducted a randomized controlled trial for a culturally adapted intervention for binge eating Latinas and I have done the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments and seen the positive improvement. We are working with women in order to get their feedback on how to make interventions more relevant for them.

 Binge eating has many consequences in terms of mental and physical health such as depression and obesity so being able to effectively identify and treat binge eating in populations where it might look different than the "Caucasian norm" is very important.