

## Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program

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*Behavioral Science and Community Health  
University of Florida*

*2010 Program  
Research Project Grant  
(5-year project)*

**Project Title:** Health Disparities in Colorectal Cancer Treatment Decision Making

**Project Summary:** Colorectal cancer accounts for 10.2 percent of all new cancers in Florida. While early detection and appropriate treatment can improve survival, colorectal cancer is still the third deadliest cancer in the U.S. Unfortunately, colorectal cancer is surrounded by some significant health disparities. Not only are Blacks more likely than Whites to be diagnosed at a more advanced stage of disease, but it also appears that race, age, gender, and income interact to influence whether patients receive all the treatment they need to survive. The reasons for these disparities are unclear, but we suspect that one factor is the decision that patients make to have or not have adjuvant chemotherapy after initial treatment. The purpose of this study is to explore what influences some patients not to have adjuvant chemotherapy, even if it may have survival benefit for them. We will study a group of patients from before they have a colonoscopy to detect cancer all the way through their decision making to have adjuvant chemotherapy. We are particularly interested in their early interactions in the disease process with primary care physicians and gastroenterologists. Are there any “cues” in their communications that lead patients to think adjuvant chemotherapy is a good or bad thing for them? Also, we are interested in the advice they receive from other members of their care team (nurses, surgeon) and their caregivers.