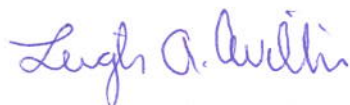


While I understand and respect the concerns raised by the OMB desk officers regarding the potential confusion of respondents due to the switching of tenses between questions in attachment 3b, the parental assessment battery in the study entitled "Preventing HIV Risk Behaviors in Hispanic Adolescents (Familias Unidas)", I am of the opinion that changing the wording in the questionnaire will compromise the science of the study. Therefore, as the project officer on behalf of the investigator Dr. Willy Prado, I would like to request that the parental survey battery, attachment 3b, be granted OMB approval in its original form. The principal investigator Dr. Guillermo Prado and his research team have used this survey battery in previous studies including an NIMH funded-efficacy trial of a longer version of the intervention being tested in this study. Surveys in the collective battery have performed very well in numerous reliability and validity tests with the target population. Dr. Prado has provided the articles in which the scales contained in the battery were first used. These articles include the questions as they were used in these studies and the corresponding measures of reliability. Given the performance of these survey items in validity and reliability tests, it seems highly unlikely that the wording of these scales is confusing to the study participants. Simply put, if the questions were somehow confusing to the participants the reliability and validity tests would demonstrate this and in previous studies they have not. The proposed study participants for 0920-09AU-"Preventing HIV Risk Behaviors in Hispanic Adolescents" are from the same target population, and the specific wording from the previously-validated survey questions remain the most scientifically sound for use in this study. Furthermore, if a respondent would have indicated that the surveys items were somehow confusing in his prior studies, given Dr. Prado's commitment to high quality science and concern for the target populations he and his team would revise and retest them accordingly. Furthermore, while we respect the comments and concerns of the assigned OMB reviewer, these surveys have been previously validated using specific wording. Given the delicate nature of survey validation even the slightest deviation in wording from what was originally tested would require another round of psychometric evaluation, which is not one of the objectives of this study. Moreover, the changing wording of the items in the survey battery will weaken the internal validity of this study. Also, since the goal of this project is to test a shorter version of a previously evaluated intervention it is necessary to use an identical survey in order to evaluate its effectiveness of the shortened versions of the intervention. Any deviation in the questions poses a large threat to internal reliability of this study.

Dr. Prado will provide a letter from a senior researcher at his institution, José Szapocznik, (Professor and Chair University of Miami Miller School of Medicine's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, nationally and internationally-renowned epidemiologist and family therapist and a senior researcher at Dr. Prado's institution), underscoring the importance of maintaining the survey question language for scientific integrity of the collected data. Dr. Szapocznik has over 3 decades of experience conducting research and working minority youth. As Principal Investigator of the NIDA-funded Florida Node of the National Clinical Trials Network on Drug Abuse, he is translating clinical research into clinical practice throughout the State of Florida, with additional sites in Colorado, North Carolina and Puerto Rico. He is currently appointed to the National Advisory Council on Minority Health and Health Disparities, NIH Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities and has served on National Advisory Councils in various roles since 1987. In closing, we believe that the scientific articles, this statement along with the expert feedback from Dr. Szapocznik, provide strong support for maintaining the survey questions in their validated form in an effort to obtain strong scientific data in support of our national HIV prevention efforts. It is our hope that after consideration of the documentation provided the OMB desk officer would grant us approval. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,



Leigh A. Willis, PhD, MPH