



Mano-a-Mano

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a cohort study?

A cohort study is a longitudinal research study in which a large group of healthy individuals are enrolled and then regularly followed up for many years to ascertain new diagnosis of selected diseases being investigated.

At enrollment, an interview is conducted to obtain information on where people live and work, what they eat, how much they exercise, whether they smoke and other factors (generally referred to as risk factors) that may influence disease risks later in life.

The relationship between having had certain risk factors and disease outcomes are analyzed to determine the disease risk by comparing the number of newly diagnosed cases among individuals with and without the risk factor.

Who can participate in this study?

- individuals between 35 and 75 years old
- individuals that were either born or are of Mexican descent
- individuals that have lived in the Greater Houston Area for at least 1 year
- up to two additional participants per household that have lived there at least 6 months

Why would someone join?

Diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes are the most common chronic diseases in Mexican-Americans and the Hispanic population in general, and are the leading causes of mortality in this population. Everyone who participates in Mano a Mano will:

- know that through a small investment of time they are directly helping in the effort to improve public health for future generations of Mexican-Americans, and eventually all Hispanics since knowledge gained from this study could help to identify risk factors that increase the chance of developing various chronic diseases; and to put together strategies to prevent or minimize the chance of developing them, increase early detection, or make treatments more effective. These risk factors may include where people live and work, what they eat, how much they exercise, whether they smoke and other factors that have not yet been identified
- have access to health tips and disease prevention information through this website
- be able to contact us anytime requesting a wide range of information such as how to access free or low cost health services available in their immediate community
- receive a \$25 gift card (maximum 3 per household)

What do participants need to do?

Each participant in Mano a Mano will:

- answer a detailed questionnaire
- be asked to provide researchers with a small sample of blood, urine, and/or saliva
- be asked to allow us to periodically contact them for several years for a short update on newly diagnosed chronic diseases and changes in certain risk factors

Is my information safe?

The security and confidentiality of your personal information is the Cohort's utmost priority and we have set in place strict security measures, which include sophisticated computer controls and highly secure access systems (password-protection and encryption) to safeguard your privacy and the confidentiality of the information you provide.

Privacy laws prohibit release of personal information that could be used to identify participants in research projects such as this. Researchers generally have access only to portions of the data that have been coded in such a way that they cannot tell the identity (name, address, etc.) of participants.

Access to the completed questionnaires is restricted to key staff members who have signed privacy agreements which bind them to protect the privacy of study subjects. When we publicize results from the study, we only report summary information, never names of study members.



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Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

Why does the Mano-a-Mano Study need so many participants?

- Some chronic diseases such as diabetes, or high blood pressure are quite common. Nevertheless, some type of cancers affect a smaller number of people, therefore, a larger pool of the original population studied is needed to better study them.
- We know that diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and cancer, are caused by multiple factors. Larger samples allow researchers to not only identify some environmental, or genetic factors that influence the risk to develop some diseases but, importantly, to investigate how these factors interact to increase or decrease each person's risk
- We wholeheartedly invite you to encourage others to participate. The more participants that take part of our study will largely improve the odds of success of our study

Why do you collect biologic specimens (blood, urine, buccal cells?)

- A very important objective of this study is to identify risk factors that can be modified to prevent the development of chronic diseases such as diabetes or cancer. One frequent dilemma is why some people who are exposed to certain risk factors develop a particular disease, whereas other people exposed to the same risk factors remain healthy. Genetics may play a significant role in answering this question. A combination of genetic information obtained from the use of these samples and information obtained from the interview will help investigators to better answer the question of how genetic susceptibility and exposure to some risk factor may (or may not) contribute to developing some chronic diseases.
- These specimens could also be used in protocols to further understand the role of other possible risk factors such as nutrition by correlating the data obtained from the questionnaires with diet components measured in the samples to the risk of cancer.

Will I get results of research done using my samples?

- Participants will not receive individual results from studies using their biological samples like the results received from a lab.
- The tests conducted by Mano-a-Mano are for research purposes only and for many of these tests it would be difficult to evaluate them on an individual basis in terms of risks or benefits.
- We will periodically post in our website summary findings of our research activities.
- There is a small chance that our study could find something that might be important to your health. If this happens, we will immediately contact you.
- Results of studies using data from the Mano-a-Mano Cohort are published in the scientific literature and information on these publications is available on this website

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