

# Laura Ernst

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**Practicum Site:** VUMC, Department of Radiology

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## **Community Engaged Research Experience with the BRAVE Study**



**Introduction:** Community engaged research (CEnR) is a process incorporating feedback from the people and communities that research will impact. The Breast cancer Risk Assessment – achieVing Equity (BRAVE) study was founded on the principles of CEnR and developed in partnership with the Tennessee Breast and Cervical Screening Program (TBCSP). BRAVE seeks to increase the use of breast cancer risk assessment (BCRA) in community health clinics in Middle Tennessee to identify a diverse population of young women at high risk for breast cancer who may be eligible for earlier or supplemental breast cancer screening with an ultimate goal of addressing existing disparities in breast cancer outcomes. The purpose of this practicum placement was to integrate community engagement and implementation science strategies in the clinical and research settings.

**Methods:** BRAVE consists of multiple ongoing projects, including a series of formative interviews with women and healthcare team members in the community, a stepped-wedge clinical trial implemented through the Meharry-Vanderbilt-TSU Cancer Partnership (MVTCP) to evaluate implementation strategies to increase uptake of BCRA, and creation of personal narrative stories about breast cancer to promote screening and risk assessment. Thus far, community engagement strategies have included the use of a community advisory board (CAB), a community engagement studio (CE Studio), and partnering with the community to develop the research study and accompanying materials. This practicum project attended to the functional aspects of study recruitment, study implementation, and commitment to community engagement throughout the process.

**Results:** Tangible outputs specific to this practicum include community-informed study materials and the creation and evaluation of four personal narratives as digital stories. Leveraging input from the CAB and CE Studio, our team produced detailed BCRA provider information/resource sheets and patient rack cards in English, Spanish, and Arabic for use as implementation strategies in the BRAVE clinical trial. The personal narrative stories will be disseminated to promote breast cancer screening, particularly among women not currently receiving regular primary care. Scientific outputs include two abstracts: 1) assessment of the feasibility of the proposed BRAVE clinical trial implementation strategies that were analyzed, submitted, and accepted as an abstract for the Dissemination and Implementation Conference and 2) community engagement strategies employed during the BRAVE study which will be submitted to the American Roentgen Ray Society Annual Meeting.

**Conclusions:** The practicum achieved its objectives by producing multiple abstracts for academic conferences, community-informed educational materials about BCRA, and first-person digital stories to promote breast cancer screening. Partnerships with MVTCP

and TBCSP, as well as nonprofit healthcare organizations, illustrated opportunities to overcome many potential limitations when seeking to advance equity in breast cancer outcomes.