Exploring the Language Barrier in Healthcare for Individuals of Latino Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Latinos are the largest minority group in the United States; despite this, they are the least likely ethnic and racial group to visit a healthcare provider. **PURPOSE**: The purpose of this research is to explore the barriers of individuals of Latino descent seeking healthcare services. The motivation for this research is to bring awareness to the most prevalent barriers and identify possible solutions to the healthcare community to increase the presence of the Latino community in healthcare services.. **METHODS**: The experimental design is a survey comprising two major types of questions. The first type of questions are aimed towards geography; this portion of the question will allow for the exploration of barriers in different locations and how they vary among different communities. This aspect of the survey will also allow for future investigation and comparisons through the years, allowing for an examination of the implementation to help the barriers and their effectiveness among the community over time. The second aspect of the survey are questions based on literature that allow for the exploration of the different types of barrier explored, such as (immigration status, lack of insurance, cultural beliefs, language barriers, and environmental factors). For the preliminary results, there is an expectation of about twenty-five volunteers through the Dallas district area, in which it is hypothesized that language is the primary barrier. Concluding the research/study accepting the hypothesis portraying language as the most substantial barrier for Latinos seeking healthcare services. **RESULTS**: Thirty respondents answered the posed questions. 43% indicated that language was the largest barrier, while 30% indicated safety concerns, and 20% responded immigration status. 53.3% indicated that medical facilities gave a low medical priority to minority populations, while 26.7% answered that this was not a reason. However, 65.5% indicated that health care had improved for elderly minorities with pre-existing conditions. **CONCLUSION**: Individuals of Latino descent viewed language as the most significant barrier preventing them from seeking a health care professional, followed by the lack of health insurance and immigration status.