



A Cognitive Aging & Health Beliefs Study: Barriers to Accessing Healthcare Services Among Latino/x Older Adults

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Introduction

Dementia is a leading cause of disability in older adults¹, of which Latino/x older adults have one of the highest and fastest-growing population percentages in the United States². Importantly, barriers to accessing healthcare may contribute to delayed or missed diagnoses. Culturally specific cognitive health beliefs³, stigma of help-seeking, and cognitive health care disparities (e.g., cultural and systemic barriers^{4,5}, ageism^{6,7}) remain prevalent amongst aging Latino/x communities.

To target health disparities and increase treatment-seeking in this population, further understanding of the barriers to care are needed.

We present findings from a larger, mixed-method community-engaged study. Here, we present results from a questionnaire aimed at understanding subjective barriers to accessing healthcare in a sample of Latino/x older adults. Specifically, we explore how language, health insurance, geographic location, transportation, disrespect, knowledge of health services, stigma, knowledge of aging processes, and family support may be barriers to accessing physical and mental health services.

Method

Participants

14 Latino/x community middle-aged and older adults ($n = 14$) were recruited from Centro Cultural of Washington County. All are members of Edad de Oro, a Latino/x senior group within Centro Cultural.

- All participants immigrated from Mexico and Latin America. 10 participants are from Mexico, 2 from Guatemala, and 1 from Ecuador.
- Majority ($n = 12$) were women and the average age was 70.87.

Procedure

Participants were recruited by leaders of Edad de Oro. Participants completed a barriers to healthcare questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study during phone interviews with student researchers. All interviews were conducted in Spanish.

Conclusions & Future Directions

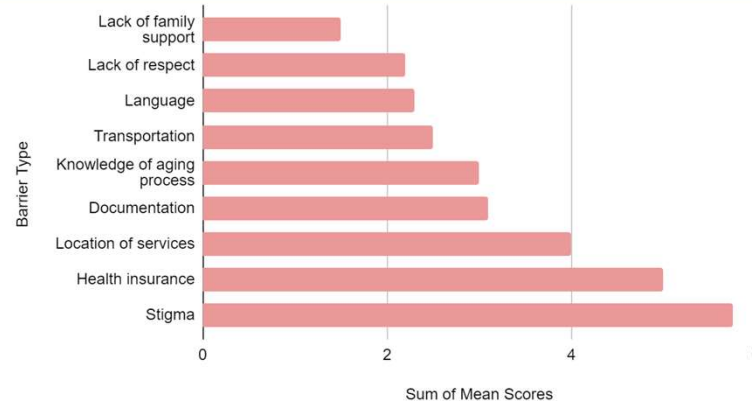
These findings provide insight into barriers to accessing healthcare experienced by Latino/x older adult community members, which primarily include stigma, health insurance, and service location.

Specifically, these results suggest a need for greater emphasis on stigma reduction among Latino/x older adults. These will inform directions for more accessible, effective, and culturally sensitive cognitive aging health promotion.

Given the prevalence of reported barriers, we would like to investigate the impact of these barriers on cognitive health outcomes. Our aim is to form a basis for community-based interventions to promote brain health, reduce dementia among Latino/x older adults, and understand how health promotion can be optimized to empower communities to be active agents in their cognitive health.

Results

Self-Reported Barriers to Accessing Healthcare Services



Self-Reported Health Service Engagement

- **Physical health:** 57% ($n = 8$) reported regularly seeing a doctor and 71% reported having seen a doctor within the last year ($n = 10$)
- **Mental health:** No participants reported regularly seeing a psychologist and 21% reported having seen a psychologist within the last year ($n = 3$)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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[View references here](#)