MISSING INGREDIENT: SPANISH-SPEAKING HISPANICS FROM THE HEALTH LITERACY STUDIES

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BACKGROUND

- 90 million people in the U.S. lack basic literacy skills.

- Literacy skills are a prerequisite to health literacy.

- Low literacy leads to low health literacy.

- Low health literacy negatively impact health and health behavior.

(Nielsen-Bohllman, Panzer & Kinding, 2004; Friedman & Hoffman-Goetz, 2008)
**Health Literacy**

- **Definition:**
  - It is a wide range of skill needed to obtain, comprehend and evaluate health information.
    - It is multi-dimensional
    - Evolves over a life time
    - Individual factors
      - Culture
      - Ethnicity
      - Education
      - Socio-economic
      - Political
      - Language

(Ratzan & Parker, 2000; Nielsen-Bohlman et al., 2004; Zarcadoolas et al., 2005)
INADEQUATE HEALTH LITERACY

Predominately found among
- Older adults
  - Functional health literacy declines with age
- Nonwhite
  - Mexican ethnicity
- Lower income
- Lower educational attainment
- Spanish language

(Baker et al., 2000; Baker et al., 2004; Paasche-Orlow et al. 2005; Gazmararian et. al., 1999)
Low health literacy is associated with poor health outcomes.

- Up to 3 times worse health outcomes.
- Poor health.
- Decrease use of preventive health services.
- Worse physical function.
- Worse mental health.
- More difficulty with activities of daily living.
- More hospital admissions.
- Higher emergency room visits and costs.
- Higher mortality

( Bennett et al., 2009; DeWalt et al., 2004; Cho et at., 2008, Baker et at., 1997; Sudore et al., 2006; Wolf et al., 2005; Howard et al., 2005; White et al., 2006)
IMPROVING HEALTH LITERACY

- Best approach to improving health outcomes.
  - In particularly among the elderly (Cho et al., 2008).
  - Ethnic minorities.
Hispanics in the U.S.

- 50.5 Million Hispanics live in the U.S.
  - Mexicans are the largest group.

  - (44%) of Hispanics scored Below Basic vs. (7%) Whites

- Spanish-speaking Hispanics score lower on health literacy tests.

- 17% of English-speaking Hispanics score inadequate and 10% score marginal on health literacy tests.

- 79% of Hispanics have less than 8\textsuperscript{th} grade education.

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; Brice et al., 2008; Britigan et al., 2009; Kutner et al., 2007; Sarkar et al., 2010, Zun et al., 2006; Sartaty et al., 2005)
Purpose: Review the relationship between health literacy and Hispanics.

Database
- CINAHL Plus with full text, Ovid, Medline, Pub Med and ERIC

1996-2010

Search terms:
- Health literacy
- Literacy
- Hispanic+
STUDY SELECTION

- 80 Articles were reviewed.
  - 30 Met inclusion criteria.
    - Both qualitative and quantitative.
    - Written in English
    - Conducted in the U.S.
Limitations

- Database search.
- Articles not written in English.
- Articles not conducted in the U.S.
RESULTS

- Few studies 2% (6/30) were conducted in English and Spanish.

- 33% (9/30) same data set.
  - Described
    - Non-Hispanic white (76%)
    - Hispanic (11%)
    - Female (57.4%)
    - High School diploma (33.6%)
RESULTS

- Different measurements of health literacy used.
  - Standardized and validated tests (Davis et al., 1993; Parker et al., 1995)
    - The Test for Functional Literacy in Adults (TOFHLA), (3/30, 10%).
    - The Short version of the Test for Functional Health Literacy (S-TOFHLA), (17/30, 56%).
    - The Rapid Test of Adult Literacy in Medicine (REALM), (17/30, 17%)
    - Others did not.
CONCLUSIONS

- Spanish is the second language most used in the U.S.
  - It is an important and strong component of Hispanic culture.
  (National Alliance for Hispanic Care, 2003; Pew Hispanic Center, 2008)

- A large gap in the health literacy research exists.

- Little is known about the health literacy needs of Spanish-speaking Hispanics living in the U.S.
IMPlications

- Nursing:
  - Assess health literacy.
  - Provide cultural and linguistic appropriate care.

- Research:
  - Need to be inclusive of all populations.
    - Hispanic subgroups.
THANK YOU