



LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN HEALTHCARE IN THE HISPANIC POPULATION

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Project Abstract

The language barrier in healthcare and Hispanic patients leads to a lack of understanding, education, and treatment regimen of diseases. Research shows there is a 25% increased rate of 30-day readmission due to the communication barrier between Spanish and English speakers. The most troubling modifiable risk factors for common disorders of patients in the Hispanic community are proper education and the societal challenges associated with their culture. This can be one of the most frustrating aspects of healthcare for the Hispanic community or those who cannot speak English, and inevitably turns them away from seeking care. With my practicum work through VSU's Certificate for Professionals course and combining nursing with the Spanish language, my goal is providing care for those who would normally have limitations. With the research I have conducted through multiple peer reviewed journals and my experience in my Spanish Practicum, I am able to gain further education on the consequences of language barriers, how awareness is being raised, and the cultural struggles related specifically to the Hispanic community.

Introduction

There is a large population of migrant farmworkers in the United States, but even more in the Southern states such as Georgia. In the state of Georgia, farmworkers endure extreme heat and harsh conditions with long hours and minimal pay. Most of the immigrants do not have health insurance and do not speak good English, if any English at all. A language barrier, with any language, can create a lack of personal connection. In the healthcare field, personal connection is very important when learning about a disease process or healthcare procedure and ensuring adequate patient care.

Modifiable Risk Factors

Challenges that those in the Hispanic community face is an education deficit in understanding of:

- Diet
- Exercise
- Potential consequences/complications of health

There are also cultural/societal challenges that affect Hispanic communities such as:

- Societal influences
- Culture of types of food consumed
- **Language barrier**

What is being done about it?

Due to costs, transportation issues, and minimal resources, most of the farmworkers/Hispanics are turned off at the thought of seeing the doctor or a healthcare professional. Ortega-Vélez et al. (2016), performed a qualitative action driven study conducted in Mexico. Their research focus is to create an awareness for health prevention, promotion, and care in their local areas so that it was of easy access to the farm workers. I enjoyed this article because I was able to relate it to the work I am doing at the Migrant Farmworker Clinic in Lake Park, GA. It is important that the farmworkers are educated in the facts of their harsh conditions and are treated on these issues.



Migrant Farmworker Clinic (MFWC), Lake Park, GA

With my practicum work at the MFWC, I provided patients with care that could not speak English. The clinic helps the people that we are discussing here today. "The clinic", stated by Eric Little, a Physician's Assistant working at the clinic, "treats chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension, we treat it early so it doesn't become a major problem that would then need to then go to the hospital". In other words, the MFWC targets the Hispanic population by providing them with health promotion and education prior to developing acute issues in the language that they are familiar with. They also provide transportation to local hospitals or specialists with a translator by their side. With time, I hope to see resources like the MFWC appearing in various locations nationwide.

References

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