

Diabetes Awareness and Knowledge Among Latinos: Does a Usual Source of Healthcare Matter?

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OBJECTIVE: To provide national prevalence estimates of usual source of healthcare (USHC), and examine the relationship between USHC and diabetes awareness and knowledge among Latinos using a modified Andersen model of healthcare access.

PARTICIPANTS: Three thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine Latino (18-years or older) participants of the Pew Hispanic Center/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Hispanic/Latino Health survey from the 48 contiguous United States.

DESIGN: Cross-sectional, stratified, random sample telephone interviews.

METHODS: Self-reported healthcare service use was examined in regression models that included a past year USHC as the main predictor of diabetes awareness and knowledge. Anderson model predisposing and enabling factors were included in additional statistical models.

RESULTS: Significant differences in USHC between Latino groups were found with Mexican Americans having the lowest rates (59.7%). USHC was associated with significantly higher diabetes awareness and knowledge (OR=1.24; 95%CI=1.05-1.46) after accounting for important healthcare access factors. Men were significantly (OR=0.64; 95%CI=0.52-0.75) less informed about diabetes than women.

CONCLUSION: We found important and previously unreported differences between Latinos with a current USHC provider, where the predominant group, Mexican Americans, are the least likely to have access to a USHC. USHC was associated with Latinos being better informed about diabetes; however, socioeconomic barriers limit the availability of this potentially valuable tool for reducing the risks and burden of diabetes, which is a major public health problem facing Latinos.

KEY WORDS: Latinos; Hispanics; diabetes; medical care; health literacy.

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