

The Role of Spirituality Healing with Perceptions of the Medical Encounter among Latinos

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BACKGROUND: Little is known about the relationship between spirituality healing and perceptions about the medical encounter among Latinos.

OBJECTIVES: To examine the association between spirituality healing and attitudes of self-reported perceptions about the medical encounter.

DESIGN: A cross-sectional telephone survey.

PARTICIPANTS: 3,728 Latinos aged ≥ 18 years residing in the United States from Wave 1 of the Pew Hispanic Center/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Latino Health Survey.

MEASUREMENTS: Dependent variables were ever prayed for healing (yes/no), ever asked others to pray for healing (yes/no), considered important spiritual healing (very vs. somewhat or not important), and ever consulted a 'curandero' (folk healer in Latin America) (yes/no). The primary independent variables were feelings about the last time seeing a Doctor (confused by information given, or frustrated by lack of information) and perception of quality of medical care (excellent, good, fair or poor) within the past 12 months.

RESULTS: Six percent of individuals reported that they had ever consulted a *curandero*, 60% prayed for healing, 49% asked others to pray for healing, and 69% considered spiritual healing as very important. In multivariable analyses, feeling confused was associated with increased odds of consulting a *curandero* (OR=1.58; 95% CI, 1.02–2.45), praying for healing (OR=1.30; 95% CI, 1.03–1.64), asking others to pray for healing (OR=1.29; 95% CI, 1.03–1.62), and considering spiritual healing as very important (OR=1.30; 95% CI, 1.01–1.66). Feeling frustrated by a lack of information was associated with asking others to pray for healing (OR=1.29; 95% CI, 1.04–1.60). A better perception of quality of medical care was associated with lower odds of consulting a *curandero* (OR=0.83; 95% CI, 0.70–0.98).

CONCLUSION: Feelings about the medical encounter were associated with spirituality healing, praying for healing, and asking others to pray for healing. Feeling confused and perception of poor quality of medical care were associated with consulting a *curandero*.

KEY WORDS: Latinos; medical encounter; spirituality healing; praying for healing; *curanderos*.

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