

# La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

Hispanic/Latino Cultures  
for Clinical Providers

# Special thanks to...

- Gundersen Health System
- La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium (LMHSC)
- LMHSC Cultural Competency Committee

for their assistance in developing this cultural competence module

# Disclaimer

## Caution on Stereotyping

- The material in this program is generalized and is not intended to perpetuate stereotypes of diverse individuals or groups of people
- Cultural traits may vary based on individual preference and level of acculturation – someone may have physical attributes of a specific heritage, but it does not mean he/she practices the traits of that culture
- Bottom line: Never Assume, Always Ask!
  - ▶ Never assume that every member of any culture holds the same beliefs and ideals
  - ▶ Use this background information to ask culturally sensitive, informed questions

# Traditional Medical Practices: Overview

- Health is synergistic
  - Continuum of body, mind, and spirit
- Hispanic/Latino health combines:
  - Respect for benefits of mainstream medicine
  - Tradition and traditional healing
  - Strong religion component from daily lives
- Hispanics/Latinos have a broad definition of health

# Traditional Medical Practices: Who Administers Care?

- Traditional medical practitioners include:
  - Curanderas (healers), espiritistas (spiritualists)
  - Hispanic/Latino pharmacists suggest both traditional medications & modern prescriptions, in urban areas
- Lay healers (in order of referral):
  - Señora/abuela (older female of community)
  - Yerbero(a) (herbalist), sobador(a) (massage therapist), or partera (midwife)
  - Curandero(a) (lay healer who may use variety of methods)

# Interaction 1 of 4

- Hispanic/Latino believe that health is a synergy of the body, mind, and spirit.
  - True
  - False

**Caution on  
Stereotyping**

# Interaction 1 of 4 (Answer)

- Hispanic/Latino believe that health is a synergy of the body, mind, and spirit.
  - True
  - False

# Traditional Medical Practices: Treatment/Procedures

- To accomplish balance, hot remedies treat cold illness, and vice versa
- Some common treatments & their uses:
  - Garlic – hypertension, antibiotic, cough syrup
  - Eucalyptus – asthma, bronchitis, T.B.
  - Chamomile – nausea, colic, anxiety
  - Aloe Vera – cuts, burns immune stimulant
  - Bricklebush – adult onset diabetes, gallbladder disease
  - Chaparral – arthritis (poultice), tea for cancer
  - Passion Flower – anxiety, hypertension



# Traditional Medical Practices: Pain Management

- Majority of Hispanic/Latino cultures are very expressive of pain
  - Includes: crying, moaning, or verbal expression
- Mexican Americans may be much less expressive
  - Pain seen as necessary part of life
  - Crying, moaning could be seen as weakness
  - Stoicism may be preferred
- Women generally have higher tolerance than men
- Numeric pain scale may not be understood
- Hispanics/Latinos may prefer oral or IV treatments to IM or rectal
- Some patients may have a fear of becoming addicted to pain medication

# Traditional Medical Practices: Views on Western Medicine

- Western medicine is usually accepted & respected as part of medical treatment
  - Many Hispanic/Latino patients may use a combination of mainstream and traditional methods
  - Always ask the patient if they are using any herbal treatment or remedies

# Interaction 2 of 4

- Various herbs are used as remedies for illnesses & regular medical maintenance.
  - True
  - False

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Stereotyping**

## Interaction 2 of 4 (Answer)

- Various herbs are used as remedies for illnesses & regular medical maintenance.
  - True
  - False

# Biological Variation: Disease Trends

- Top 10 leading causes of death for Hispanics/Latinos (1998):
  1. Heart Disease
  2. Malignant neoplasms
  3. Accidents and adverse effects
  4. Cerebrovascular diseases
  5. Diabetes Mellitus
  6. Pneumonia & influenza
  7. Homicide & legal intervention
  8. Chronic liver disease & cirrhosis
  9. Chronic obstruction & pulmonary diseases
  10. Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period

# Biological Variation: Disease Trends

- Top 2 leading causes of death for Hispanics/Latinos and non-Hispanic/Latino whites are the same:
  - Heart disease & cancer
  - For Hispanics/Latinos – those two causes account for 45% of all
  - For non-Hispanic/Latino whites – those 2 causes account for 55% of all deaths
- Hispanic/Latino adults have lowest rate of smoking
  - Hispanic/Latino 8<sup>th</sup> graders have highest rate of smoking among peers

# Biological Variation: Life Expectancy

- Hispanics/Latinos have a pattern of positive health indicators:
  - These include: diet, low levels of smoking & illicit drug use, and strong family structure
  - Unfortunately, acculturation tends to deteriorate these positive traits
- Hispanics/Latinos have been shown to live longer than non-Hispanic/Latino whites
  - Hispanic/Latina Women – 82.6 years of age
  - Hispanic/Latino Men – 75.1 years of age

# Interaction 3 of 4

- The number one leading cause of death among Hispanics/Latinos (1998) was:

(Select one)

- Diabetes mellitus
- Heart disease
- Malignant neoplasms

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## Interaction 3 of 4 (Answer)

- The number one leading cause of death among Hispanics/Latinos (1998) was:

(Select one)

- Diabetes mellitus
- Heart disease
- Malignant neoplasms

# Preferred End of Life Care: Death and Dying

- Most Hispanics/Latinos view death as a natural part of the cycle of life
  - Life is only a temporary loan or gift from God
- Many patients may look to family members for decision making
  - Expect a large number of family members visiting throughout the day and night
- Family may not want patient to be told of terminal illness (always ask head of family if appropriate)
  - The family may think it will effect their ability to live as long as possible
- Female family members are most likely to provide the end of life care; however, males will also be supportive

# Preferred End of Life Care: Grief and Loss

- Dying in hospital may not be preferred
  - May prefer to spend final days at home
- Hospice may be looked down upon
  - Could be seen as giving up hope
- Expect spiritual amulets, medallions, and rosary beads
  - Desire for a priest or spiritual leader is common
    - Death is a very important spiritual event
- Organ donation & autopsy commonly viewed negatively for spiritual reasons (always ask)
  - If procedure importance is explained, the family may agree

# Preferred End of Life Care: Grief and Loss

- Wailing, loud talking to deities, and contact with the deceased body (hugging, kissing) is possible
- Puerto Ricans may also experience
  - Fainting, nausea, vomiting, or other physical illnesses
  - Reaction is purely psychosomatic, but practitioners should offer sympathy and any necessary care
- For some Hispanic/Latino, stoicism is respected, however an expressive grieving process seems more common
- The grieving process in general, is similar to other cultures

# Interaction 4 of 4

- In Hispanic/Latino culture, the family is very involved in decision making and end of life care.
  - True
  - False

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# Interaction 4 of 4 (Answer)

- In Hispanic/Latino culture, the family is very involved in decision making and end of life care.
  - True
  - False

# Question 1 of 5: Identify the correct choice to complete each of the bulleted statements below:

- The Hispanic/Latino community has these in several different forms:
- In general, Hispanics communicate pain:
- A major problem amongst Hispanic/Latino youth is:
- The Hispanic/Latino culture views death as:

Choices:

- a. Important and connected with spirituality
- b. Traditional Healers
- c. Smoking
- d. Expressively

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# Question 1 of 5: Identify the correct choice to complete each of the bulleted statements below:

## (Answers)

- The Hispanic/Latino Community has these in several different forms:  
**Traditional healers**
- In general, Hispanics/Latinos communicate pain **expressively**.
- A major problem amongst Hispanic/Latino youth is **smoking**.
- The Hispanic/Latino culture views death as **important and connected with spirituality**.

Choices:

- a. Important and connected with spirituality
- b. Traditional Healers
- c. Smoking
- d. Expressively



## Question 2 of 5

- Traditional Hispanic/Latino healing reinforces the ideas that diseases/medical states are a result of:

(Select one)

- A curse
- Imbalance of hot and cold principles
- Personal infliction

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## Question 2 of 5 (Answer)

- Traditional Hispanic/Latino healing reinforces the ideas that diseases/medical states are a result of:

(Select one)

- A curse
- Imbalance of hot and cold principles
- Personal infliction

# Question 3 of 5

- In general, Hispanics/Latinos use Western medicine:

(Select one)

- Exclusively
- Never
- Along with traditional healing

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## Question 3 of 5 (Answer)

- In general, Hispanics/Latinos use Western medicine:

(Select one)

- Exclusively
- Never
- Along with traditional healing

## Question 4 of 5

- The Hispanic/Latinos population has longer life expectancy than non-Hispanic/Latino white populations.
  - True
  - False

**Caution on  
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## Question 4 of 5 (Answer)

- The Hispanic/Latino population has longer life expectancy than non-Hispanic/Latino white populations.
  - True
  - False

# Question 5 of 5

- How might a Hispanic/Latino family express grief?

(Select all that apply)

- Development of psychosomatic illnesses
- Loud wailing or talking to deities
- Stoicism

**Caution on  
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# Question 5 of 5 (Answer)

- How might a Hispanic/Latino family express grief?

(Select all that apply)

- Development of psychosomatic illnesses
- Loud wailing or talking to deities
- Stoicism



# La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

We hope you had a good experience using this module.  
If you have any comments or ideas you would like to  
share about this module, or future modules, please  
contact the LMHSC Cultural Competence Committee at:

[hscinformation@westernnc.edu](mailto:hscinformation@westernnc.edu)

Thank you!



# La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

For additional cultural competency resources,  
please visit the [website](#).

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