

Quick Reference Sheet for Hispanic

-Caution on Stereotyping-

Background:

“Hispanic” may include: Mexican, Cuban, Central American, Spanish, Puerto Rican, South American, and Asian-Hispanics heritage

Very different cultures

Native cultures (Mexico – Aztecs)

European (Argentina – Large German & Italian communities)

Mix (Puerto Rico & Cuba – Afro-Hispanics, Spanish, Natives)

Statistics:

Mexicans largest Hispanic group in U.S.

Puerto Ricans are the 2nd largest Hispanic group in U.S.

Social Structure:

Common cultural threads heavily based on:

La Familia – family

Personalismo - personal relationships

Respeto – respect

Confianza - trust

Extended families and the support role they play for one another is as important as the nuclear family

Interdependence is favored over independence

Consult with family for big decisions

Health providers are generally given a high level of respect & their advice is valued

Hispanics tend to stress the importance of personal relationships rather than institutional relationships

Beliefs/Values:

Over 77% of are Catholic, which may be different from U.S. Catholic practices

Religion strong component

Avoiding a close personal space can be interpreted as a sign of rejection or serious illness

Hispanics show respect by avoiding direct eye contact with authority figures, however health care providers are expected to look directly at the patient, even if using an interpreter

It is polite to address Hispanic adults as Senor (Mr.), Don (Sir), Senora (Mrs.) or Dona (Madam), as well as Mr. and Mrs.

Even if you do not speak Spanish, show respect with greetings such as:

Buenos dias (good morning)

Buenas tardes (good afternoon)

Expressive culture

Physical contact and closeness are the norm, not the exception

Tend to be present oriented

Traditional Medical Practices:

Continuum of body, mind, and spirit

Hispanic health combines:

Respect for benefits of mainstream medicine

Tradition and traditional healing

Majority of Hispanic cultures are very expressive of pain (crying, moaning, or verbal expression)

Numeric pain scale may not be understood

Ask the patient if they are using any herbal treatment or remedies

Biological Variations – Disease Trends:

Top 2 leading causes of death for Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites are the same - heart disease & cancer

Hispanic adults have lowest rate of smoking

End of Life:

View death as a natural part of the cycle of life

Family may not want patient to be told of terminal illness (always ask head of family if appropriate)

Dying in hospital may not be preferred

Expect spiritual amulets, medallions, and rosary beads

Desire for a priest or spiritual leader is common

Organ donation & autopsy commonly viewed negatively for spiritual reasons (always ask)

If procedure importance is explained, the family may agree

Wailing, loud talking to deities, and contact with the deceased body (hugging, kissing) is possible

Please see the following PowerPoints for further details:

Hispanic – [Clinical Provider](#)

Hispanic – [General](#)