

## NEWS RELEASE

## AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

1000 WILSON BOULEVARD, SUITE 1825, ARLINGTON, VA 22209



### **For Information Contact:**

Lydia Sermons-Ward, 703-907-8640

[press@psych.org](mailto:press@psych.org)

Jim Rosack, 703-907-7862

[jrosack@psych.org](mailto:jrosack@psych.org)

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## **Spanish-Speaking Latinos Use Less Intensive Mental Health Services than English Speakers in California, New *AJP* Study Says**

**Arlington, Va.** - Spanish-speaking Latino patients in a large California public mental health system were more likely to receive initial treatment for severe mental illnesses in outpatient settings than were English-speaking Latinos or Caucasians. A higher proportion of Spanish speaking patients had major depression, and lower proportions had bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, compared with the two other ethnic groups. They also had a lower rate of substance use disorders.

These findings are reported in the August issue of *The American Journal of Psychiatry (AJP)*, the official journal of the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The examination of mental health services use by Spanish-speaking Latinos appears in "A Longitudinal Study of the Use of Mental Health Services by Persons with Serious Mental Illness: Do Spanish-Speaking Latinos Differ From English-Speaking Latinos and Caucasians?" by David Folsom, M.D., and colleagues of the University of California, San Diego.

The data are from San Diego County's Adult Mental Health Services program, which serves people with Medi-Cal or no health insurance. During the period 2000–2005, treatment for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression was initiated for 4,638 Caucasians, 1,144 English-speaking Latinos, and 539 Spanish-speaking Latinos. In the analysis, mental health services were consolidated into four categories: hospital, emergency room, jail and outpatient settings.

Hospitalization rates were similar in the three groups, but the Spanish-speaking Latinos were less likely to enter care through jail or emergency rooms than were English-speaking Latinos or Caucasians. Although they had the highest proportion of patients receiving outpatient services, they had the lowest number of visits. They were also more likely to live independently or with family.

In their use of mental health services, the English-speaking Latinos more closely resembled the Caucasians than they resemble the Spanish-speaking Latinos.

An editorial by APA Immediate Past President Pedro Ruiz, M.D., of the University of Texas, appears in the same issue.

*AJP* Editor-in-Chief Robert Freedman, M.D., stated, "This article is a fascinating snapshot of the process of integration of Hispanic people into the culture of the United States. Preservation of their native language—either because of recent immigration or due to a family decision—appears to be a better predictor of Hispanics' use of mental health care services than is ethnicity."

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**Note to Editors:** Contact Jim Rosack at 703-907-7862 / [jrosack@psych.org](mailto:jrosack@psych.org) or the APA Office of Communications and Public Affairs at 703-907-8640 / [press@psych.org](mailto:press@psych.org) for an embargoed copy of the article and accompanying editorial.

**About the *American Journal of Psychiatry*:**

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