

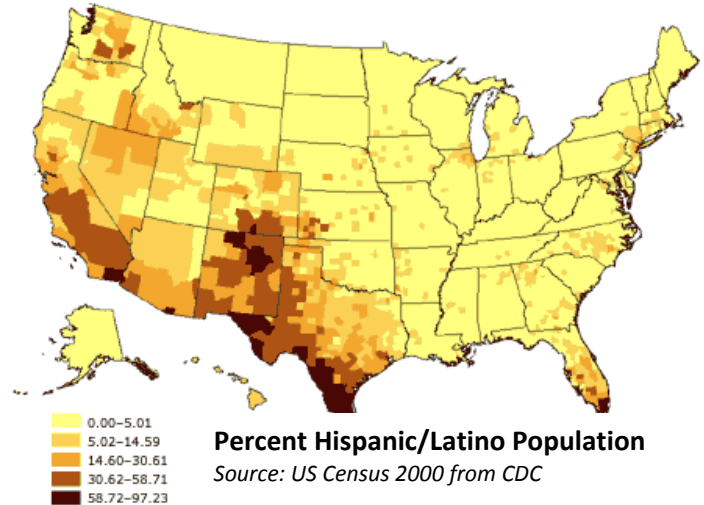


Mental Health Disparities: Hispanics/Latinos

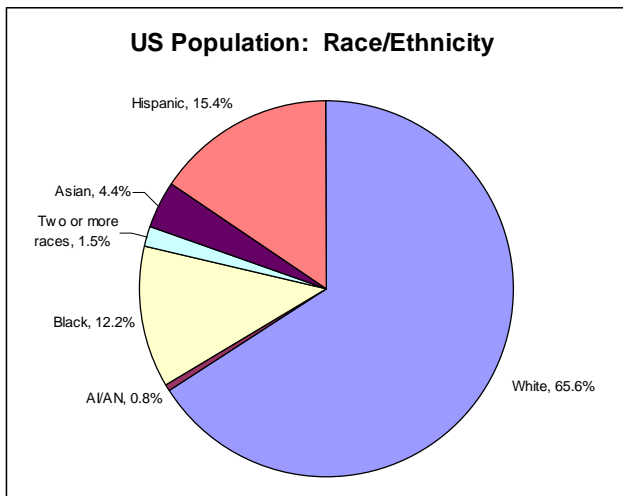
Population: Hispanics/Latinos

The U.S. Hispanic/Latino community is made up of people from many different nations and races and while many have lived in the U.S. for many generations, others are recent immigrants. Many face inequities in socioeconomic status, education, and access to health and human services.

- Latinos make up about 15% of the U.S. population and are the fastest growing minority – expected to make up nearly one-fourth of the population by 2050. (1)
- Almost 2/3 of U.S. Hispanics are Mexican Americans.
- Nationally, 33% of Hispanics are uninsured, compared to 16% percent of all Americans. (2)
- Among Spanish-speaking people in the U.S., more than 13 million speak English “not well” or “not at all” (3)



- Studies have shown that older Hispanic adults and Hispanic youth are especially vulnerable to the stresses of immigration and acculturation. (5)
- More Latino youth have pervasive feelings of sadness and hopelessness than whites (36% versus 26%) and more attempt suicide (10% versus 6% of whites). (6) Hispanic youth are less likely than non-Hispanic youth to use alcohol or illicit drugs. (7)
- Attitudes about mental illness and mental health services can affect the use of services. For example, among some Latinos, depression may be mistaken for nervousness, tiredness or a physical ailment, and may be viewed as something temporary.

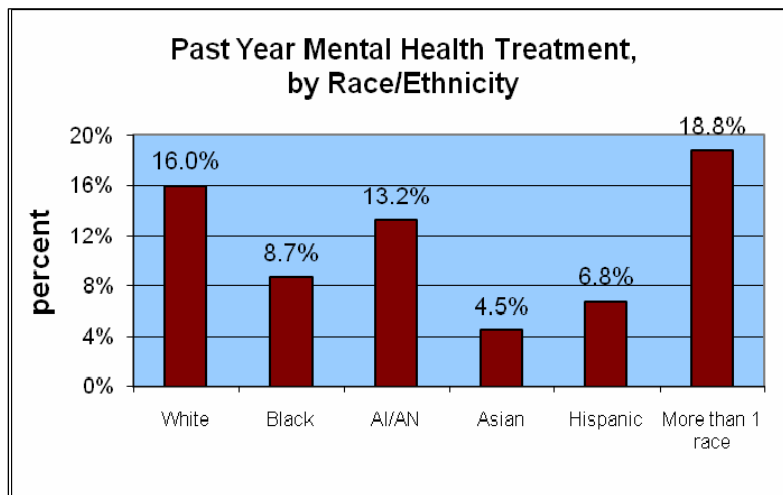


Mental Health Status, Use of Services, and Disparities

- Rates for most mental disorders among Latinos are similar to that of the overall population. However rates vary among Latino sub-groups, and rates for most mental disorders are higher for US-born Latinos than for Latino immigrants. For example, one study found that Puerto Ricans had the highest overall prevalence rate of mental illness among the Latino ethnic groups assessed. (4)

Group	Percent uninsured
Hispanic	33%
AI/ANs	33%
African Americans	20%
Native Hawaiian/PI	20%
Asian American	16%
White (not-Hispanic)	11%
Source: US Census, 2008	

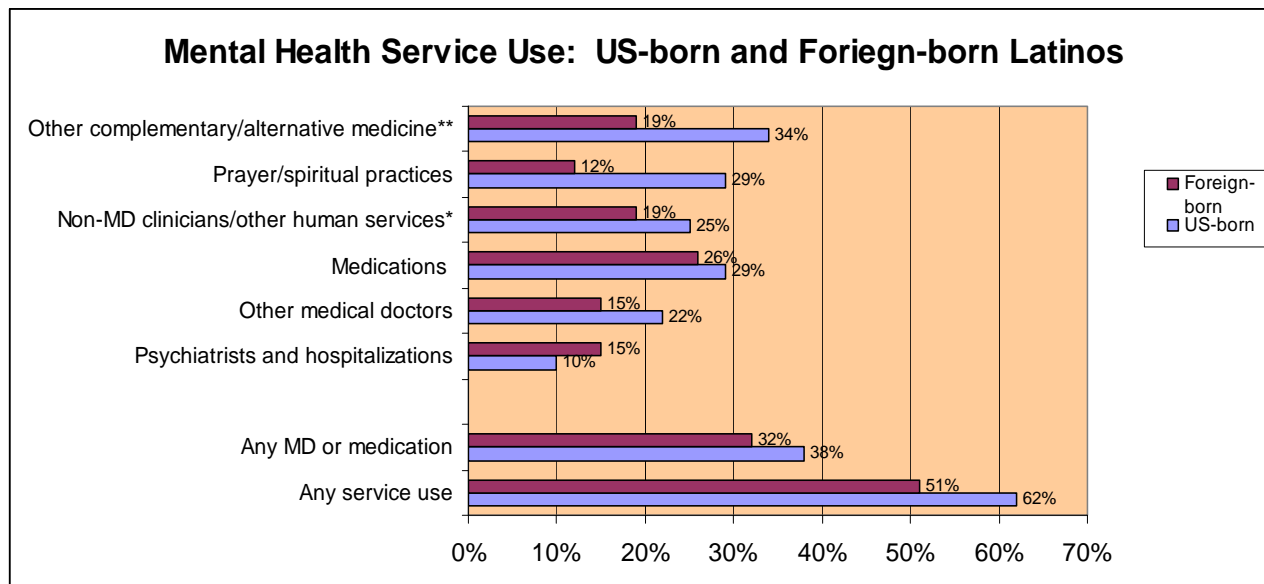
- Among Hispanics with a mental disorder, fewer than 1 in 11 contact a mental health specialist, while fewer than 1 in 5 contact general health care providers. Even fewer Hispanic immigrants seek these mental health services. (8)



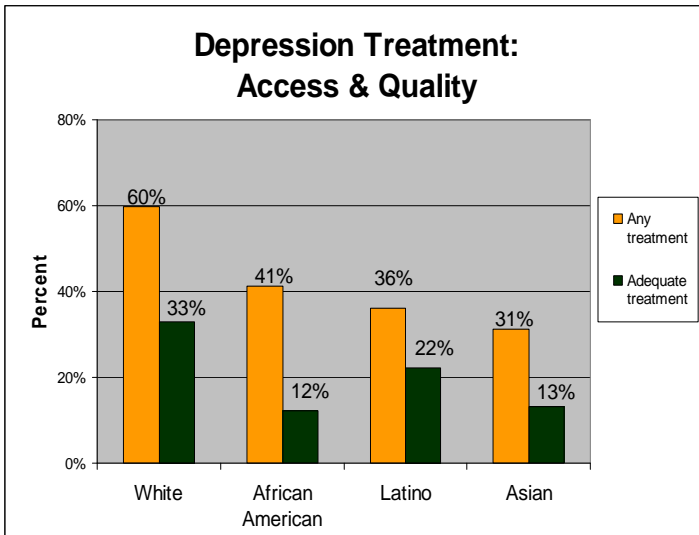
Source: SAMHSA, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2008

- While Latinos use mental health services less than the general population, rates of mental health service use among Latinos have increased substantially in the past decade. (9)
- Many Hispanics/ Latinos rely on their extended family, community, traditional healers, and/ or churches for help during a mental health crisis.
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- Estimates of the use of alternative and complementary therapies by Hispanic Americans have ranged from 7 to 44%. (8)
- Several studies have found that bilingual patients are evaluated differently when interviewed in English as opposed to Spanish and that Hispanics are more frequently undertreated.
- One national study found that only 36% of Hispanics with depression received care, compared to 60% of whites. (10)



* Including psychologists, counselors, other health professionals, religious/spiritual advisors, self-help groups, Internet support groups
 ** Including herbal therapy, homeopathy, high-dose vitamins, acupuncture, biofeedback, chiropractic exercise, massage, hypnosis, relation or meditation, etc.
 Source: Sibney et al. The Role of Nonmedical Human Services and Alternative Medicine. Chapter in Disparities in Psychiatric Care. Ruiz and Primm editors. Lipincott Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, MD, 2010.



Source: Alegria et al, 2008

Barriers to Care

Key barriers to mental health treatment for Hispanics/Latinos, as for most people:

- economic barriers (cost, lack of insurance)
- lack of awareness about mental health issues and services
- stigma associated with mental illness

Additional access to care issues include:

- lack of education and pervasive poverty
- language barriers
- lack of culturally appropriate services

Source: Alegria et al, 2008

- Lack of appropriate intervention strategies
- mental health professional shortages

Responses/Strategies

- Increase awareness of mental health and chronic disease connection
- Conduct stigma awareness training with gatekeepers
- Improve provider cultural competence
- Improve language accessibility
- Advocate for policies that promote social justice, equity, and equality
- Comprehensive (including mental health and substance use disorders) affordable health coverage for all
- Focus on prevention, early intervention

Resources and References

Resources

National Council of LaRosa (NCLR) www.nclr.org

National Hispanic Medical Association www.nhmamd.org

American Society of Hispanic Psychiatry (ASHP)
www.ashp.us.com

Hispanic Medical Professionals (on Facebook)
www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=201417725110

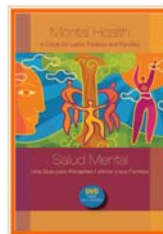
National Alliance for Hispanic Health (NAHH)
www.hispanichealth.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) www.nami.org

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) www.LULAC.org

References

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- (2) US Census. (2008) Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007. www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p60-235.pdf
- (3) US Census. (2003) Summary Tables on Language Use and English Ability: 2000. www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t20/index.html
- (4) Alegria M, et al. (2007) Prevalence of psychiatric disorders across Latino subgroups I the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(1), 68-75.
- (5) National Council of La Raza. (2005) Critical Disparities in Latino Mental Health: Transforming Research into Action. www.napolitano.house.gov/mhcaucus/reports/Critical_Disparities_in_Latino_Mental_Health.pdf
- (6) CDC. (2007) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. Youth Online. <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss>
- (7) SAMHSA, HHS. (2005). The NSDUH Report: Substance use among Hispanic Youths. www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k5/HispanicYouth/HispanicYouth.cfm
- (8) Surgeon General, HHS. (2001) Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity 2001. www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/cre/
- (9) Alegria M, Mulvaney-Day N, Woo M, Torres M, Gao S, Oddo V. (2007) Correlates of past-year mental health service use among Latinos: results from the National Latino and Asian American Study. *Am J Public Health*. 97(1), 76-83.
- (10) Alegria, et al. (2008) Disparity in Depression Treatment Among Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations in the United States. *Psychiatric Services*, 59(11).



Mental Health: A Guide for Latinos and their Families is a 30-minute DVD on mental health for Latinos produced by APA. Both the DVD and a companion guidebook are in English and Spanish.

The DVD features discussions with Latino individuals and families talking about their experiences with mental illness, and with Latino psychiatrists discussing common mental illnesses, treatments, and special issues among Latinos.