

# Elder Mistreatment among Latin@s

## Key Research Findings in the Mexican-American Community

### Latin@s in the United States

Latin@s or Hispanics - people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American culture or origin regardless of race - are the nation's largest ethnic minority and account for 17% of the total US population.

Of those, **Mexicans are the largest group, accounting for 63% of the Latin@ or Hispanic population.**

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)



#### ELDER ABUSE :

Intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm is intended) to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or other person who stands in a relationship of trust to that elder (Bonnie & Wallace, 2003).

psychological abuse

sexual abuse

caregiver neglect

financial exploitation

physical abuse



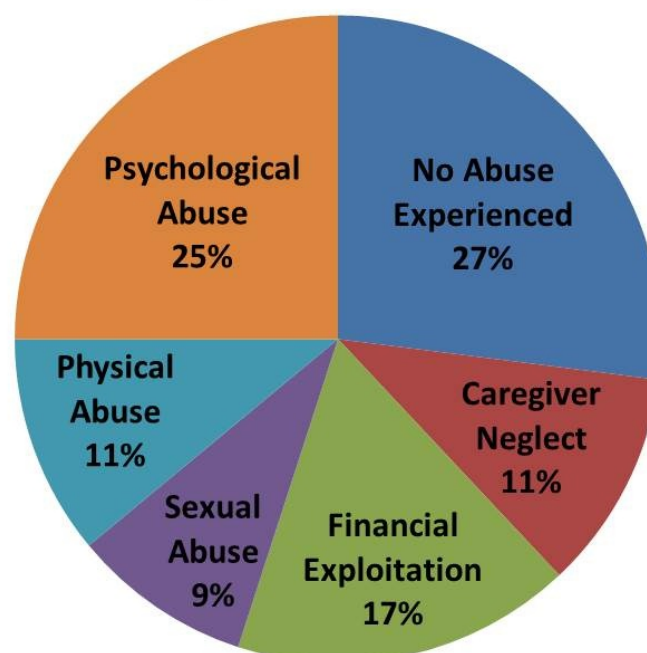
#### Among Latin@s

Latinos elders are less likely than their white counterparts to report physical or verbal abuse. The most common types of abuse experienced are listed in the chart above (DeLiema et al, 2012).

40% experienced elder abused

1.5 % reported elder abuse to adult protective services

Types of Abuse



Due to the limited number of studies of elder mistreatment in the Latin@ population as well as study design variations, it is difficult to estimate an exact prevalence rate of elder mistreatment (Laumann et al, 2008).

Males are significantly more likely to perpetrate abuse against females, particularly male spouses, due to a culture of *machismo* - male dominance in society (Enguidanos et al, 2014).

# Mexican-American Culture, Attitudes, and Beliefs

Among Latin@s, Mexican-Americans were the least likely to use long-term care services and are more likely to heavily rely on relatives to provide them with care at home (Herrera et al, 2008).



Many caregivers readily use religious and spiritual coping mechanisms to ameliorate the stress and burden associated with caregiving (Pearce, 2005).

In one study, Mexican-American elders did not identify elder parents providing adult children with money or other resources to be exploitative (Dakin and Pearlmutter, 2009).

Mexican-Americans tend to discuss a situation related to abuse with their families rather than reporting abuse to authorities

(Enguidanos, et al, 2014)

## TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LATIN@ INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

The utilization of promotores - advocates that act on behalf of an older adult - is a culturally informed method of intervention to provide services and resources (often in a community based-setting).

Make no assumptions - the elder is the expert on their own culture and beliefs. Explore the cultural context of elder mistreatment (e.g. how much of their resources do they share and how they feel about it).

Culture, along with factors such as English proficiency, fear of authorities, and living arrangements impact how elders perceive mistreatment, their knowledge of support services, and if they report or seek help for mistreatment.



(Moon, 2000)

## Latin@s may under-report abuse due to:

- feelings of *vergüenza* (shame) and stigma
- general mistrust of government
- limited English proficiency
- fear of being placed in an institution
- citizenship status of themselves or family members
- cultural beliefs about finances



(DeLiema et al., 2012; Irizarry-Irizarry, 2005)

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