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 these, Mexican-Americans, accounting for 63% of the Latin@ or Hispanic population.

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)

Elder Abuse:

intentional acts that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm is intended) to a vulnerable elderly caregiver or another person who stands in a relationship of trust to that elder (Borrone & Wallace, 2003).

Types of Abuse

Psychological Abuse 25%

Physical Abuse 11%

Neglect 31%

Financial Exploitation 24%

No Abuse/Exploitation 27%

Due to the limited number of studies available to the Latin@ population in the United States, design variations, it is hard to estimate an exact prevalence rate of elder exploitation.

(DeLiema et al., 2008)

40% experienced elder abuse

1.5 % reported elder abuse to adult protective services

Latin@s may under-report abuse due to:

- feelings of vergüenza (shame) and stigma
- mistrust of government
- general mistrust of authority
- Latin@s may under-report abuse due to:

- fear of being placed in an institution
- citizenship status of themselves or family members
- cultural beliefs about finances

(DeLiema et al., 2012; History, 2005)

Harassment, inattention, discrimination, and exploitation by family members, or other cultural and community groups contribute to psychological abuse and mistreatment. Caregivers that act on behalf of authorities, and living arrangements impact how elders feel about it. (Bonnie, 2003)

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

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)

Mexican-American Attitudes, Culture, and Beliefs

Mexican-Americans tend to discuss a situation related to abuse with their families rather than reporting abuse to authorities (Enguidanos et al., 2014).

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. (Enguidanos et al., 2014)

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Source:

American Geriatrics Society, 60(7)


For more information related to the report of various projects under government sponsorship, we are encouraged to explore their websites for more information. (National Academies Press, 2003; American Journal of Public Health, 91(3), 75-80).


This document was completed for the National Center on Elder Abuse, administered by the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under Grant 90-XX-0001-01-01 (No.90AB0003-01-01) from the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grantees carrying out projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to explore their websites for more information. (National Academies Press, 2003; American Journal of Public Health, 91(3), 75-80)

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American Geriatrics Society, 60(7)
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, Mexican Americans make up a significant portion, 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 or caregiver who stands in a relationship of trust to that elder (Bonnie & Wallace, 2003).

Types of Abuse

1. Psychological Abuse
   - Harassment
   - Isolation
   - Stigma
   - Intimidation
   - Fear

2. Physical Abuse
   - Hitting
   - Pushing
   - Knocks
   - Burnings
   - Stabbing
   - Shootings

3. Caregiver Neglect
   - Failure to provide basic care
   - Overcrowding
   - Failure to protect

4. Financial Exploitation
   - Stealing
   - Forgery
   - Malfeasance
   - Fraud

5. Sexual Abuse
   - Sexual assault
   - Incest
   - Non-consensual

Note: elder abuse can involve multiple types of abuse.

Among Latin@s

Latin@s 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 abuse

1.4% reported elder abuse to adult protective services

Due to the limited number of studies on abuse among Latin@s, it is difficult to estimate the exact prevalence of elder mistreatment (Irizarry-Irizarry et al., 2005).

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

Mexican-American Culture, Attitudes, and Beliefs

Mexican-Americans tend to discuss a situation related to abuse with their families rather than reporting abuse to authorities (Enguidanos et al., 2014).

Culture, along with factors such as religious or cultural preferences, 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.

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

Tips for Working with Latin@ Individuals and Families

The utilization of promoters – 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).

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

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

Source:


International玖 criteria should be explored in further research, including how care is refused, how care is prevented, and how care is delayed (Fleming, 2010).

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