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Correlation of Acculturation in the U.S. and Oral Health Literacy

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Abstract

Introduction: The United States is one of the leading nations among developed countries regarding high infant mortality rates, obesity rates, and chronic disease rates. Healthcare disparities and inequalities across the U.S. are becoming an increasing problem; low-income and minority families are regularly denied basic healthcare or simply cannot afford care. Disparities and inequalities across the U.S. are becoming an increasing problem; low-income and minorities and low-income patients from minority families are regularly denied basic healthcare or simply cannot afford care. Disparities and inequalities across the U.S. are becoming an increasing problem; low-income and minorities and low-income patients from minority families are regularly denied basic healthcare or simply cannot afford care.

Methodology

Patients from the CrossOver Healthcare Ministry clinics were recruited to measure reasons for dental disengagement. The clinics developed and provided a list of patients that have not been to the clinic in over a year or at. Eligible patients were asked to complete a consent form and surveys on dental health status, socioeconomic status, and health conditions. Oral health knowledge was assessed using a validated instrument, the comprehensive measure of oral health literacy (COLUMH) that included a set of twenty-five questions designed to help understand the patient’s knowledge of dental health. Because most of the patients that register with the CrossOver clinics are Latinx and Spanish-speaking individuals, the surveys were administered in both English and Spanish, depending on the patient’s preference. Responses from the surveys were entered into REDCap research portal and were subsequently analyzed using SAS.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (N = 227)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| COLUMH           | High (Score 35 – 23) 97 (42.7%)  
|                  | Low (Score 0 – 14) 300 (77.3%)  
|                  | Lived in US      |
|                  | Less than 5 years 37 (16.3%)  
|                  | 5 – 10 years 32 (14.1%)  
|                  | More than 10 years 120 (52.9%)  
|                  | Born in the US 38 (16.7%)  
|                  | Education        |
|                  | Less than High School 126 (55.5%)  
|                  | High School 44 (19.4%)  
|                  | Some College 22 (9.7%)  
|                  | College or more 35 (15.4%)  
|                  | Gender           |
|                  | Male 71 (31.3%)  
|                  | Female 156 (68.7%)  
|                  | Language         |
|                  | English 47 (20.7%)  
|                  | Spanish 149 (60.6%)  
|                  | Other 18 (7.9%)  
|                  | Multi-lingual 12 (5.7%)  
|                  | Current Smoker Yes 21 (9.3%)  
|                  | No 206 (90.8%)  
|                  | Age              |
|                  | 47 (9.2)  
|                  | *Mean(SD) reported  

Results

Table 2: Years lived in US vs COLUMH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Low COLUMH</th>
<th>High COLUMH</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                  | Less than 5 years 22 (99.5%) 15 (40.5%)  
|                  | 5 – 10 years 19 (95.4%) 6 (15.4%)  
|                  | More than 10 years 70 (58.3%) 50 (41.7%)  
|                  | Born in the US 19 (50.6%) 19 (50.0%)  

Discussion

The non-significant association between time since settling in the U.S. and oral health literacy point to the difficulties in accessing and utilizing oral health care in the U.S. More effort is needed to make these services accessible to low income, immigrant populations as an initial step in closing the oral health disparities gap.

Works Cited


Acknowledgements

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- iCubed Commonwealth Scholars Program

57% of our sample had low oral health literacy while 43% had high oral health literacy. 17% were born in the U.S., 53% had lived more than 10 years in US and 30% had lived less than 10 years in the US. Majority of our sample (66%) were predominantly Spanish speakers, 21% speak English while 8% and 6% spoke another language and are multilingual, respectively. The mean age of our study participants was 48 years, 60% of our sample was Female and 91% do not currently smoke.