



Disparities in Perceptions of Healthcare Provider Communication among Women: Findings from the 2003 Health Information Trends Survey (HINTS)

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Introduction

- Effective and consistent patient-provider communication is an important determinant of patient satisfaction, adherence to prescribed regimens, and health outcomes.^{1,2}
- However, there are few data on how consistently healthcare providers perform communication tasks such as:
 - listening,
 - explaining,
 - being respectful,
 - spending time,
 - including patients in joint decision-making, or the extent to which perceptions about whether providers perform such tasks vary by demographic group, health status, or insurance status.

Objective

- To examine the extent to which women of different ethnicities perceived whether the aforementioned communication tasks were consistently performed by their healthcare providers during the previous year.

Methods

- Data from the 2003 Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS)⁴, a public dataset of the National Cancer Institute, were used in this study.
- The data were collected between October 2002 and April 2003, and contain responses of 6,149 respondents who were 18 years and older from a probability sample of US households identified through random-digit dialing.
- Telephone interviews were conducted by trained interviewers using a standard interview schedule.
- The interview protocol includes constructs from established health communication theory.³

Data analysis

- We analyzed the data by selected demographic, health status, and other variables using SUDAAN, a statistical analysis program designed specifically for analyzing complex datasets.⁴

Results

- None of the racial groups perceived that healthcare providers *a/ways* performed the five communication tasks.
- Hispanic women, however, reported a lower mean rating of 3.35 \pm .70 compared to non-Hispanics who reported scores of 3.45-3.48
- Ratings also varied by age, work status, health status, level of reported depression, and insurance status ($P \leq .001$).

Conclusion

- Healthcare providers need to improve their communication with Hispanic women who are young, uninsured, and unemployed, and those already in poor health or depressed.
- Examining why these discrepancies exist and what can be done to improve patient-provider communication should be investigated further.

References

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