

Health Status and Behaviors among Adults residing in Rural Dominican Republic

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INTRODUCTION

The health status and behaviors of adults residing in rural areas of the Dominican Republic have been largely overlooked.

Monitoring detailed community health in rural areas is critical to developing tailored health education, public and medical intervention programs to improve overall community health.

OBJECTIVE

Examine the general health status, conditions, and behaviors of adults in rural Dominican villages.

METHODS

Data were collected as an anonymous health questionnaire in April 2009 from a convenience sample of adult participants receiving care through a medical mission in four rural villages in the Dominican Republic.

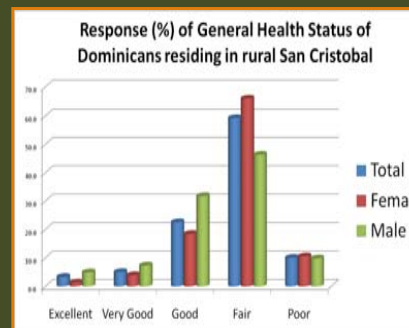
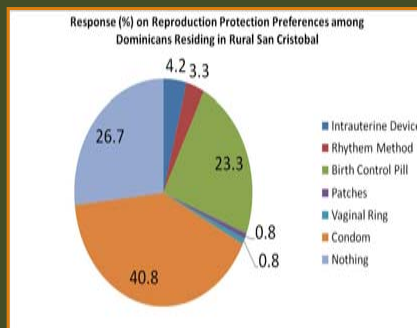
Data on age, gender, height, weight, general health status, conditions (diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol, cardiovascular disease & asthma) and health behaviors (smoking, drinking, & reproduction) were collected and analyzed.

Table. Demographic Characteristics of 117 Dominicans residing in Rural San Cristobal

Characteristic	Total (± SD)	Female (± SD)	Male (± SD)
Age (years)	34.0 ± 2.1	34.5 ± 2.9	33.3 ± 3.0
Height (inches)	65.2 ± 0.5	63.5 ± 0.4	67.9 ± 0.8
Weight (pounds)	145.7 ± 3.8	141.2 ± 5.0	152.8 ± 5.5
Body Mass Index	24.2 ± 0.7	24.6 ± 0.9	23.5 ± 1.0
Abdominal Girth (inches)	33.6 ± 0.7	34.3 ± 0.9	32.6 ± 0.8

Table. Prevalence of Health Conditions and Health Behaviors among 117 Dominicans residing in Rural San Cristobal

Condition & Behaviors	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Health Conditions			
Diabetes	15.0	18.4	9.8
Hypertension	35.8	38.2	34.1
Cholesterol	10.8	10.5	9.8
Myocardial Infarction	6.7	7.9	4.9
Cerebral Infarct	4.2	5.3	2.4
Asthma	14.2	13.2	17.1
Behaviors			
Smoking	33.4	32.9	34.2
Alcohol Consumption	61.7	53.9	75.6



RESULTS

- 117 participants
 - 76 (63%) women
 - Sample mean age was 35.2 ± 16.1 years.
- 69.2% rated their general health as "Fair/Poor"
- health conditions reported:
 - 15.4% diabetes, 36.8% hypertension, and 6.9% history of heart attack
 - 14.5% asthma
 - 33.6% current smokers, 43.6% allowed smoking in homes
- Greatest health concerns:
 - 42.7% reported nutrition and access to medical care; an
 - 40.0% thought 2 children/household appropriate
 - 46.2% reported condoms preferred method of contraception.

DISCUSSION

Public health interventions targeting identified health measures and behaviors, and increasing knowledge of available regional health resources paramount, as well as efforts curbing tobacco exposure via education and clinic outreach