

Increasing Home Dialysis among Spanish-Speaking Mexican American Patients: Challenges & Opportunities Karen-Marie Eaton, BS^{*1}; Danelle Radney, MBA^{*2}; Steven M. Brunelli, MD, MSCE¹; Unini Odama, MD, MPH, MBE²; Francesca Tentori, MD, MS¹

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Introduction

- Home dialysis offers end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) patients an alternative treatment to in-center hemodialysis (ICHD) and may offer clinical, economic, and quality of life advantages.¹
- Hispanic individuals have over twice the incidence of kidney failure compared to non-Hispanic White individuals, yet they are less likely to be treated with home dialysis.²⁻⁴
- As of 2020 in the United States only 11.8% of Hispanic individuals who started dialysis received it at home, compared to 14.7% of non-Hispanic White individuals.²
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019, 61.5% of all Hispanics indicated they were of Mexican origin.⁵

Objective

Since home dialysis use is lower in Mexican American patients, in this study we sought to understand experiences and uncover facilitators and barriers to home dialysis from the perspective of patients and care partners.

Methods

- Participants included Mexican American patients receiving dialysis, both in-center and home, at a dialysis organization, and their care partners.
- 28 participants were recruited [17 patients (11 ICHD and 6 home dialysis) and 11 care partners.
- The locations (Houston, Los Angeles, and Phoenix) were chosen due to their large Mexican American population.
- Recruited participants joined in-person focus groups held in December 2022.
- Focus group questions centered around key factors influencing dialysis modality choices. Focus groups were audio and video recorded and transcribed verbatim. The focus group sessions were conducted in Spanish language, translated in real time by a certified interpreter, and transcribed in English.
- Responses to questions were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis.

Results

Demographic	Patient	Care Partner
Ν	17	11
Female, n	6	5
Age, n		
≤50 years	4	6
51-64 years	8	4
65+ years	5	1
Location, n		
Los Angeles	4	4
Phoenix	8	5
Houston	5	2

Study Participant Characteristics



In Their Own Words - Quotes from Study Participants

Diagnosis Acceptance

"[Hispanics] are burros [stubborn]. That's not going to happen to me." (ICHD patient, Phoenix)

Why is this happening? I still don't understand why. Why I have this disease. I don't accept it. I have to accept it, because I do it every day. [...] It's difficult for me in the fact that I don't accept it. (Home patient, Los Angeles)

Education

"They sent me to many classes there, [...] it was in English, but my daughter went to interpret me. They did not have the option to do it in Spanish." (ICHD patient, Phoenix)

Faith

"God is the only one that's been with me. It doesn't matter what time, what moment. God is always with you." (Home patient, Phoenix)



Modality Selection Influencers Identified by Focus Groups

- **Diagnosis Acceptance:** Surprise at the kidney failure diagnosis was common and the road to acceptance of disease/dialysis can be long and difficult.
- Cultural Lens to Trust: Doctors are the authority for healthcare information, a largely unquestioned source of trust.
- **Education:** Experience with education is uneven, with some translation barriers and strong preference for in-person education.
- **Faith:** Faith/religion is an important part of Mexican Americans' experience of health conditions and treatment.
- **Family Support:** Families and care partners are critical in the modality decision, but care partners also need their own support.

Trust

"You don't see our pain" (Care Partner, Los Angeles)

"I did not understand a lot of things. But I think it was my fault. I didn't ask the questions. Because, I trusted the doctor and what they told me. I blindly trusted what he told me." (ICHD patient, Los Angeles)

Family Support

"With my family, [I] did have a lot of support. My wife, my children... They're very [supportive] and everything. The only thing maybe is because sometimes I don't ask." (Home patient, Phoenix)

Results

Facilitators & Barriers to Home Dialysis Modality Selection

- Physician guidance is the most important factor in the initial modality decision for Mexican American patients and care partners. Trust in a physician's recommendation is largely unquestioned.
- Patients and care partners want earlier and more detailed education about home modalities, in English and Spanish, to help make their initial modality decision.
- After starting dialysis, most patients and care partners were aware of the benefits of home dialysis; however, broader themes point to fundamental cultural barriers.
- Other significant barriers included the fear of being solely responsible for a complex procedure and loss of social interaction.

Conclusions

Opportunities exist to build on the strong patient preference for physician-led health information, and to focus on decreasing literacy and language barriers in the Mexican American dialysis population.

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