

Do Hispanic Patients Who Require a Medical Interpreter Understand the Severity of Their Glaucoma Diagnosis?

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Background and Hypothesis:

Glaucoma is a group of progressive optic neuropathies characterized by a degeneration of retinal ganglion cells with characteristic changes in the visual field. The Los Angeles Latino Eye Study (LALES) is the largest and most recent study to determine the prevalence of open-angle glaucoma in Hispanics; reported at nearly 5%. Between 2010 – 2019, Hispanic patients accounted for more than half of the United States population growth, reaching a record of 60.6 million Hispanics living in the United States. With an influx of Hispanic's migrating to the United States, there is an increased need for medical interpreters to assist medical professionals in encounters with Hispanic patients. The success of a medical encounter relies on a multitude of factors, but when a medical interpreter is involved, the stakes are even higher. We hypothesize that Hispanic speaking patients will have lower rates of understanding their glaucoma diagnosis and severity, in comparison to English speaking patients due to gaps in translation provided by medical interpreters.

Project Methods:

Native Spanish and native English-speaking patients from the Eskenazi Health Eye Clinic were recruited via phone, reminding them of their upcoming eye appointment and their eligibility to participate in the study. Interested patients were provided with information regarding the study and consent materials at the start of the medical encounter. Participants who consented were administered the survey at the end of their medical encounter, in their preferred language, in person, at the clinic.

Results:

This is an ongoing prospective study.

Potential Impact:

This study will determine if medical interpreters successfully relay all the necessary information regarding a Hispanic patient's glaucoma diagnosis. This study could also provide a partial explanation as to why there is a high no show rate and high medication noncompliance rate within the Eskenazi Health Eye Clinic Hispanic population.