Ay Dios Mío: Hispanic Health Communications in a Cross-Cultural Market

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Hispanics/Latinos are the fastest-growing population segment in the country, and healthcare companies are racing to find ways to penetrate this market. Hispanics have specific health care needs, as well as the same needs as other ethnic groups. Health-related care is culture-bound and shaped by family history and beliefs about health, disease, and medicine. Also important is the role of caregivers and the extended Hispanic family.

This presentation will provide cross-cultural insights by reviewing existing research on Hispanic healthcare consumers and the implications for public relations and strategic communication practitioners. Specifically, we will describe and interpret demographic and geographic data, and discuss limitations on aggregate quantitative data. We will present different approaches to recruiting Hispanic participants for health-related market research, and the strengths and weaknesses of different methods, specifically with respect to health, disease, medicine, and health care.

It is clear that this market is not a homogenous, monolithic group, but there are certain recurring characteristics and many similarities with the so-called general market. Some differences are critical to understand in designing communication strategies, while others are not. Given the role of health and medicine in society today, health care organizations are in a unique position to lead other industries in culturally competent communication with Latino audiences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe cultural aspects of health and Hispanic/Latino cultural values that influence health care decisions.
- Understand qualitative and quantitative distinctions between different groups of U.S. Hispanic health consumers.
- Discuss the potential strengths and challenges of different media channels and tactics to reach the diverse Hispanic/Latino publics.