

In This Issue

In this month's *Hot Topics Newsletter*, we feature the latest research in older adult behavioral health in the Hispanic and Latino community. This rapidly growing community, made up of individuals from many Latin American countries and regions, is diverse culturally, but also shares many cultural factors including (often) Spanish language, religious backgrounds, and certain values. Being aware of the diversity within this group as well as shared cultural background is important when working with Hispanic and Latino older adults. This group faces disparities in access to treatment for mental health care, as well as under-representation in clinical and research settings. Hispanic older adults are also disproportionately affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. This quarter, we highlight research published in this group to increase the understanding of aging and mental health within these communities. Be sure to check out The E4 Center's special webinar by Dr. Daniel E. Jimenez, "Throw the Manual Out the Window: Lessons Learned from a Lifetime of Working with Latinos" on Wednesday, September 7, 2022 from 12:00PM-1:30PM CDT. For more information, please check the [E4 Events Calendar](#).



Older adult behavioral health in the Hispanic and Latino community

[Is acculturation associated with the cognitive performance of older Hispanics?](#)

Alam and colleagues examine the association between acculturation and cognition in a sample of 616 Hispanic older adults from the NHANES Study. Cognitive performance was measured using the Animal Fluency Test (AFT) and the Digit Symbol Substitution Test (DSST). Nativity status and language acculturation were examined as proxy measure for level of acculturation. Their results showed that lower acculturation was associated with poorer cognitive performance and add to the understanding of how cultural factors may influence cognitive health.

[MIND Diet and cognitive function in Puerto Rican older adults](#)

Boumenna and colleagues report findings on long-term adherence to the Mediterranean-Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet and cognitive function in Puerto Rican older adults in the US. The MIND diet encourages natural plant foods high in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, which inhibit β -amyloid deposition and neurotoxic death. It also limits animal products and

foods high in saturated fats. They found that MIND diet adherence was associated with higher cognitive function at baseline and over an eight-year follow-up period. MIND diet adherence was not related to eight-year cognitive trajectory. They also examined the role of socioeconomic factors such as education, poverty, and job complexity.

[Cultural factors related to neuropsychological performance and brain atrophy among Hispanic older adults with amnesic Mild Cognitive Impairment \(aMCI\): A pilot study](#)

Rodriguez and colleagues conducted a pilot study examining relationships among acculturation to the US, literacy, cognitive performance assessed in Spanish, and MRI measures of regional brain atrophy in older immigrants from Latin-American countries diagnosed with amnesic Mild Cognitive Impairment (aMCI). Their results showed that higher acculturation was associated with reduced performance on verbal learning measures when assessed in the primary language. Higher literacy was related to better performance in language measures, but also with greater atrophy in brain regions susceptible to neurodegenerative disease.

Trajectories of concurrent depressive symptoms and cognitive function on health outcomes and mortality among older Mexican Americans

Chen and colleagues examined data from four waves of the Hispanic Established Populations for Epidemiologic Studies of the Elderly (H-EPESE) to determine how trajectories of depressive symptoms and cognitive function affect adverse health outcomes in Mexican Americans over the age of 75. Latent growth curve analysis was used to identify concurrent trajectory classes of depressive symptoms and cognitive function. Their results demonstrated that the co-occurrence of high depressive symptoms and declining cognitive function trajectories were at greater risk for ADL and IADL limitations, medical care utilization, and mortality, compared to Mexican American older adults with low depressive symptoms and high cognitive function trajectories.

Association of diabetes and hypertension with brain structural integrity and cognition in the Boston Puerto Rican Health Study Cohort

Guan and colleagues examine relationships between hypertension and diabetes comorbidity and brain structural integrity and cognitive performance in Puerto Rican older adults compared to older adults in the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative

(ADNI) and National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC). Prevalence of hypertension and diabetes were two and five times higher in Puerto Rican older adults, respectively. Comorbidity was related to greater brain structural disruptions, suggesting a potential contributing factor to health disparities in cognitive functioning in this population.

Increasing pain interference is associated with cognitive decline over four years among older Puerto Rican adults

Milani and colleagues explore bidirectional association between pain interference and cognitive performance over a four-year period in Puerto Rican older adults. In their path model, they found that increased pain interference at four-year follow-up was associated with increased cognitive decline at follow-up. Greater cognitive performance at baseline was associated with lower pain interference at follow-up. These results highlight the dynamic nature of pain and cognition in Puerto Ricans, a group that reports more chronic, severe, and interfering pain compared to other Hispanic ancestry groups.

A systematic review of loneliness and social isolation among Hispanic/ Latinx older adults in the United States

Tibiriça´ and colleagues conducted a systematic review of loneliness and social isolation in Hispanic/Latinx older adults in the US. They found that the literature on this topic is mixed, but that most studies demonstrate that social isolation and loneliness negatively impact physical and mental health outcomes in this population, including medical comorbidity, frailty, and cognitive impairment.

Foundational Competencies in Older Adult Mental Health Online Certificate Program

This peer-reviewed, 14-hour online certificate program provides foundational knowledge in older adult mental health for health care providers who work with older adults.

<https://bit.ly/MHcertificate>

Upcoming Events

You can register for these events or learn more by going to our website at e4center.org/calendar

SEPT

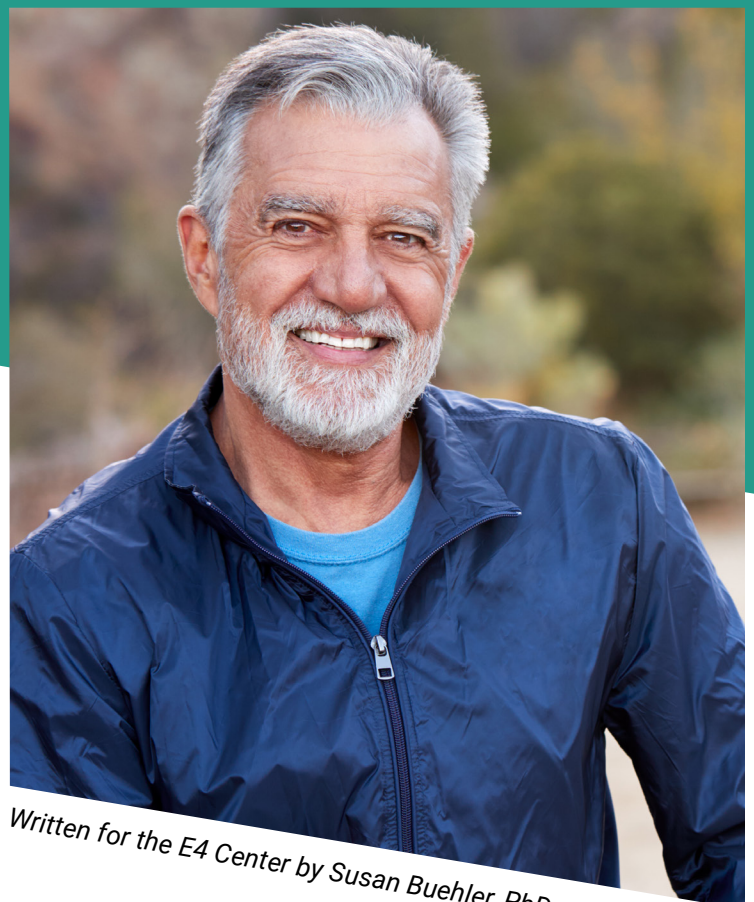
Throw the Manual Out the Window: Lessons Learned from a Lifetime of Working with Latinos

September 7
@ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm CST

OCT

Safe – Home Opioid Management Education in Older Adults (SAFE-HOME) Naloxone and Opioid Awareness

October 5
@ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm CST



Written for the E4 Center by Susan Buehler, PhD