

Latinos' Views of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic at 20 Years

FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY



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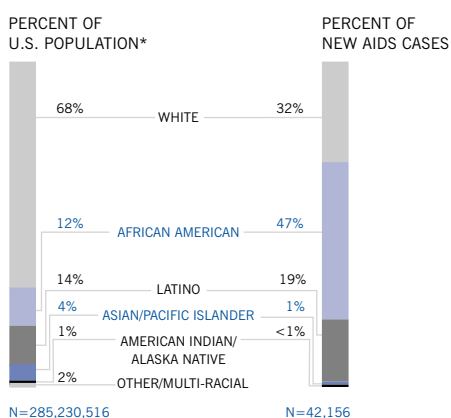
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INTRODUCTION

EXHIBIT 1
U.S. Population and Newly
Reported AIDS Cases,
by Race/Ethnicity, 2000^{2,3}



* May not total 100% due to rounding; includes Puerto Rico.

Note: White, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native and other/multi-racial groups do not include those of Hispanic origin. In the 2000 Census, people were allowed for the first time to report more than one racial category. In this exhibit, percentages for each population group do not include people who reported more than one racial category. These individuals are included in the category, "other/multi-racial."

Latinos, who now comprise the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority in the United States, continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Although they represent approximately 14% of the U.S. population, Latinos accounted for 19% of new AIDS cases reported in 2000.^{1,2,3} (see exhibit 1). The AIDS case rate (per 100,000) among Latino adults (30.4) was almost four times that for whites (7.9), and AIDS is now the fourth leading cause of death for Latinos between the ages of 25 and 44.^{2,4}

The epidemic's effect on different subgroups of Latinos is also striking.⁵ For example, the AIDS case rate among adult Latinas is 13.8 per 100,000, more than six times the rate for white women (2.2).² And although Latino youth represent approximately 14% of U.S. teenagers, they accounted for 20% of new AIDS cases reported among those ages 13–19 in 2000.⁶ In addition, in a recent study of young men who have sex with men (MSM), HIV prevalence (the proportion of people living with HIV in a population) for young Latinos was 6.9, compared to 3.3 for whites.⁷ Finally, there is growing evidence that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasingly concentrated in low-income communities in which people of color are often disproportionately represented.⁸ Such communities generally are faced with multiple other health and social issues and limited resources with which to respond to the epidemic.

UNDERSTANDING THE VIEWS OF LATINOS

The disproportionate impact of HIV on Latinos, as well as the continued growth of the Latino population in the United States, point to the need to understand their views and knowledge of the epidemic. Such views can play an important role in how community leaders, health officials, and other policymakers target educational information and design programs that best meet the needs of this community.

This report, based on a national survey, examines Latinos' views of HIV/AIDS, including differences between Latino subgroups. Where data are available, analyses of changing attitudes over time are also provided. The survey indicates that Latinos are concerned about the epidemic and that attitudes toward HIV/AIDS vary significantly by race and ethnicity, with Latinos expressing more concern and urgency about the epidemic than the public overall. In addition, views within the Latino population vary significantly by income, education, language, and age. Although the sample size in this survey does not allow for comparisons of views by national background (i.e. Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, etc.), such distinctions are also important given the role ethnic identity and culture play in individuals' beliefs and attitudes.

This report serves as a companion document to the full survey findings, which are published in *The AIDS Epidemic At 20 Years: The View from America*, and available on the Foundation's website at www.kff.org. The findings are based on a nationally representative telephone survey of 2,683 adults 18 and older conducted in both English and Spanish (depending upon the respondent's preference). The sample included 1,542 whites, 549 Latinos, and 431 African Americans. Latinos and African Americans were intentionally oversampled in order to ensure sufficient sample sizes to allow for analyses across race and ethnicity and within these two populations (see methodology section). The survey represents the third in a series of national surveys on the public's knowledge of and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation between 1995 and 2000.^{9,10,11,12}

Together, these three surveys capture Latinos' views during a time of significant change in the epidemic. In 1995, a new, more powerful class of anti-HIV drugs – protease inhibitors – became available. By 2000, AIDS-related deaths were one-third the level they were in 1995, due primarily to the widespread use of these drugs in combination with other treatments. Although the decline in AIDS deaths was not experienced equally by all racial and ethnic groups, in general, this five-year period was marked by a dramatic decrease in mortality and increased hope for many.² Recent data indicating an end to these sharp declines in AIDS deaths, however, point to the importance of continuing to monitor knowledge and attitudes over time.¹³

The section that follows presents findings on Latinos' sense of urgency about the epidemic in their own lives, the nation and the world. Subsequent sections describe Latinos' knowledge and information needs, their views and experiences with HIV testing, and their positions on various policy issues.

SECTION I: LATINOS' PERCEPTION OF THE EPIDEMIC IN THE U.S. AND GLOBALLY

Latinos view AIDS as the number one health problem facing the nation and also express concern about the epidemic's impact close to home. Latinos are much more likely than whites to view AIDS as an urgent health problem for the nation and for people they know, perhaps a reflection of the disproportionate impact of the epidemic in this community. In many cases, Latinos' sense of urgency is similar to the high levels expressed by African Americans, who are also more likely than whites to express concern. Latinos with less education, lower incomes, and those interviewed in Spanish are more likely to express concern about the risk and potential impact of HIV/AIDS.

LATINOS ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT AIDS IN THE U.S.

In response to an open-ended question, Latinos rank AIDS as the number one (40%) health issue facing the nation, essentially tied with cancer (37%). Latinos (40%) are substantially more likely than whites (23%) and as likely as African Americans (41%) to rank AIDS as the number one health problem facing the nation (see exhibit 2).

As the number of AIDS-related deaths in the U.S. has declined, so too has the percentage of Latinos who name AIDS as the number one health problem facing the nation – from 51% in 1995 to 40% in 2000. This five-year trend is similar for African Americans, and is even more pronounced among whites^{9,10,11,12} (see exhibit 3).

However, when asked specifically about the problem of HIV/AIDS, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Latinos say AIDS is a more urgent health problem facing the nation today than it was a few years ago, similar to the percentage who believed this to be the case in 1997 (67%). Latinos (64%) and African Americans (70%) are significantly more likely than whites (44%) to say that AIDS is a more urgent health problem today.

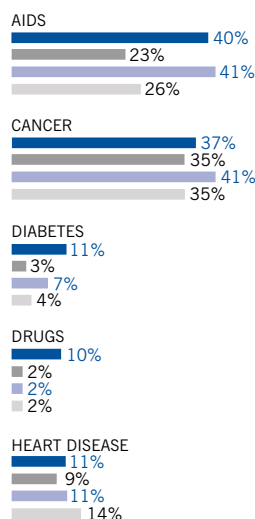


EXHIBIT 2
Views of the Most Urgent
Health Problem Facing
the Nation Today, by
Race/Ethnicity

■ LATINO
■ WHITE
■ AFRICAN AMERICAN
■ TOTAL

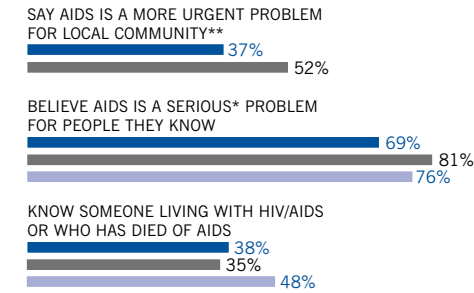
	1995	1997	2000
PERCENT WHO VIEW AIDS AS THE MOST URGENT HEALTH PROBLEM			
Latino	51%	50%	40%
White	42%	35%	23%
African American	56%	52%	41%
Total	44%	38%	26%
RANKING			
Latino	1st	1st	1st*
White	1st	2nd*	2nd
African American	1st	1st	1st*
Total	1st	1st*	2nd

*Responses not statistically different from cancer

EXHIBIT 3
Percent Who View AIDS
as the Most Urgent
Health Problem Facing
the Nation, 1995–2000,
by Race/Ethnicity^{9,10,11,12}

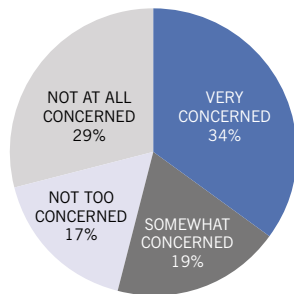
EXHIBIT 4
Percent of Latinos Who...

■ 2000
■ 1997
■ 1995



* Combines "very" and "somewhat" response
** No data for 1995

EXHIBIT 5
Latinos' Personal Concern About Becoming Infected with HIV



AIDS HITS CLOSE TO HOME

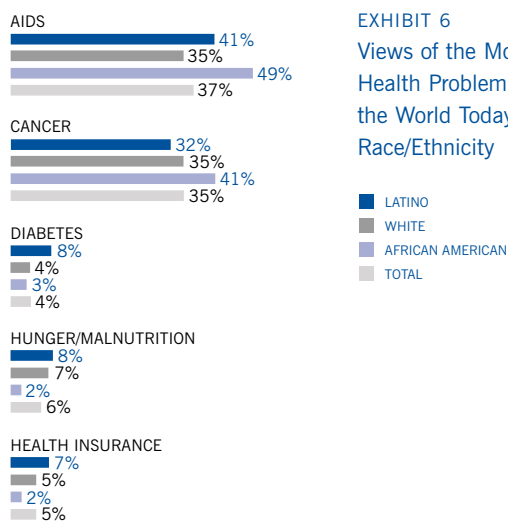
More than one-third of Latinos (37%) say AIDS is a more urgent health problem for their local community today than it was a few years ago. While the proportion of Latinos who believe this to be the case decreased since 1997 (52%), it is still significantly greater than the proportion of whites (18%). Moreover, almost seven in ten (69%) Latinos say AIDS is a serious problem for people they know, including 54% who say it is a "very serious" problem. The proportion saying AIDS is a serious problem for people they know has declined from 76% in 1995 and 81% in 1997 (see exhibit 4).

Nearly four in ten (38%) Latinos also say they know someone who has HIV/AIDS or has died of AIDS. Latinos (38%) are as likely as whites (42%), but less likely than African Americans (57%) to report knowing someone who is living with HIV/AIDS or has died of AIDS.

Latinos also express concern about the impact of HIV/AIDS in their own lives, with a majority (53%) saying they are either "somewhat" or "very" personally concerned about becoming infected with HIV (see exhibit 5). Personal concern among Latinos has fluctuated over the past five years from 51% in 1995 and 64% in 1997. Personal concern among Latinos (53%) is much greater than that expressed by whites (33%), as is concern among African Americans (56%). More than four in ten (43%) Latinos say that their concern has grown in the past few years (compared to 18% of whites and 35% of African Americans).

AIDS VIEWED AS NUMBER ONE HEALTH ISSUE GLOBALLY

An estimated 36.1 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, and more than 22 million people have already died of the disease.¹⁵ When asked to name the number one health problem facing the world today, four in ten (41%) Latinos cited AIDS, ranking it above other problems. Forty-nine percent of African Americans and 35% of whites also ranked AIDS as the number one health problem facing the world (see exhibit 6). Three-quarters (75%) of Latinos say AIDS is a more urgent problem for the world today than it was a few years ago.



LATINO PARENTS' CONCERN ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S RISK

Young people under the age of 25 are estimated to represent approximately half of all new HIV infections nationally, and Latino youth are at particularly high risk for infection.^{6,14} Latino parents express high levels of concern about their children's risk. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Latinos with children under age 21 say they are "somewhat" or "very" concerned about their son or daughter becoming infected with HIV and half (50%) say they are more concerned about this risk today than they were a few years ago.

HOW YOUNG LATINO ADULTS VIEW AND EXPERIENCE THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC IN THE U.S.

As a group, the Latino population in the U.S. is younger than the general population, and research shows that younger Latinos, including young men who have sex with men, are at particularly high risk for HIV infection compared to whites.^{6,7,16} It is therefore important for policymakers to understand how this group views and experiences the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and how such views may differ from those of older Latinos. For purposes of this analysis, younger Latinos are defined as those ages 18–29.

CONCERN ABOUT HIV/AIDS

The majority (59%) of young Latino adults say they are personally concerned about becoming infected with HIV, including more than a third (37%) who are “very” concerned. Almost half (49%) say that their personal concern about the risk of infection has grown in recent years (see exhibit 7).

Almost one-third (31%) of young Latinos report knowing someone who has HIV/AIDS or has died of AIDS. Younger Latinos are less likely than those over 30 to report knowing someone (31% compared to 42%). Half (49%) of young Latino adults also say that AIDS is a “very” serious problem for people they know.

HIV KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Knowledge of the basic facts about HIV/AIDS is high among younger Latinos. The vast majority of young Latino adults know that a person can become infected with HIV by having unprotected intercourse (99%) and sharing an IV needle (99%). Slightly fewer (86%), but still a sizeable majority, understand the risk of infection through unprotected oral sex.

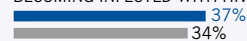
About half (52%) of young Latino adults are aware that having another sexually transmitted disease (STD) such as herpes or gonorrhea can *increase* a person’s risk for infection with HIV. More than three-quarters (76%) of young Latino adults know that there are drugs available that can lengthen the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. However, less than half (42%) know that a pregnant woman who has HIV can take certain drugs to reduce the risk of her baby being born infected.

As with the public as a whole, misperceptions about the risk of infection through casual contact continue among Latinos; however, misperceptions are more common among older Latinos. For example, those ages 30 and older are significantly more likely to think that kissing (52%), touching a toilet seat (34%), and sharing a drinking glass (30%) pose a risk of infection or do not know whether these activities pose a risk, compared to those under age 30 (30%, 21%, and 13%, respectively).

EXHIBIT 7 Percent of Latinos, by Age, Who...

■ 18 TO 29 YEARS OLD
■ 30 YEARS AND OLDER

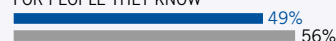
ARE PERSONALLY “VERY” CONCERNED ABOUT
BECOMING INFECTED WITH HIV



KNOW SOMEONE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS
OR WHO HAS DIED OF AIDS



BELIEVE AIDS IS A “VERY” SERIOUS PROBLEM
FOR PEOPLE THEY KNOW



HIV TESTING AND OTHER PREVENTION INFORMATION NEEDS

In general, Latinos' HIV information needs do not appear to vary significantly by age. However, majorities of young Latino adults say they want more information about a range of HIV-related issues, including information about how to talk to children (70%) and a partner (50%) about HIV/AIDS. Four in ten (41%) young Latino adults also say they need information about how to talk to their doctor or health care provider about HIV/AIDS.

The majority of younger Latinos also say they need information about HIV testing (62%), including information about: the different kinds of tests available (68%); what test results mean (62%); the cost of testing (61%); where to go to get tested (60%); and whether to get tested (58%). Over half (55%) also want information about whether HIV test results are confidential, a finding that is particularly significant in light of the fact that 39% of young Latino adults say they would be "very" or "somewhat" concerned that people would think less of them if they found out they had been tested for HIV.

The majority (59%) of young Latino adults say they have been tested for HIV, significantly more than those 30 and older (37%). The most common reasons younger Latinos give for *not* having been tested are: don't think they are at risk (54%); don't like needles or giving blood (24%); don't know where to go to get tested (20%); concern about confidentiality (20%) and fear they'll test positive (11%).

SOURCES OF HIV INFORMATION

As with Latinos in general, the majority of young Latino adults rely most heavily on television (68%) and newspapers and magazines (60%) for information about HIV/AIDS, with just under half (45%) relying on the radio and more than one-third (36%) relying on families and friends. Younger Latino adults are significantly more likely to rely on the Internet for HIV information (28%), compared to those over age 30 (11%). One-fifth (21%) of younger Latinos rely on materials distributed at church or by a religious organization, similar to their older counterparts (25%).

In addition to these information sources, more than one-third (37%) of younger Latinos have talked to their doctor or health care provider about HIV/AIDS. Among those who talked to their doctor about HIV/AIDS, 83% say they talked about getting tested for HIV; 73% about their personal risk for HIV infection; and 72% about how to prevent HIV infection.

The vast majority of young Latino adults say high school sex education classes should include information about how HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are spread (98%), how to protect against HIV and other STDs (97%), and how to use condoms as protection against HIV and other STDs (91%).

SECTION II: LATINOS' KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Knowledge about the basic facts about HIV/AIDS is very high among Latinos, as with the public overall. Yet misperceptions about the risk of casual contact persist. In addition, knowledge of other clinical issues related to HIV is uneven. Latinos say they need more information about a range of HIV/AIDS issues, and cite a variety of information sources upon which they rely.

THE FACTS ABOUT HIV/AIDS

Most Latinos understand that a person can become infected with HIV through unprotected intercourse (98%), sharing an IV needle (96%) and having unprotected oral sex (88%); however, as with the general public, misperceptions about the risk of contracting HIV through casual contact persist. For example, 37% of Latinos say that a person can become infected with HIV through kissing; an additional 8% of Latinos do not know whether or not kissing poses a risk of infection. According to the CDC, casual or close-mouth kissing poses no risk of transmission, and even open-mouth kissing in the absence of open wounds or sores in the mouth is considered a very low-risk activity.¹⁷ Nearly three in ten (29%) Latinos incorrectly believe that touching a toilet seat poses a risk for infection or do not know whether this poses a risk. Among Latinos, men (27%) are twice as likely as women (13%) to believe that a person can become infected this way. One in four (24%) Latinos thinks that sharing a drinking glass used by someone with HIV/AIDS poses a risk for infection or do not know whether this activity poses a risk. In general, Latinos, as well as African Americans, are more likely than whites to say that these activities pose a risk for infection (see exhibit 8).

EXHIBIT 8
Perceptions of Risk
Related to Very Low
or No-Risk Activities,
by Race/Ethnicity

Please tell me if a person can become infected with HIV this way or not?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
KISSING			
Latino	37	55	8
White	28	65	8
African American	44	46	10
Total	31	62	8
SHARING DRINKING GLASS			
Latino	19	76	5
White	14	79	7
African American	25	63	12
Total	15	77	7
TOUCHING TOILET SEAT			
Latino	20	71	9
White	8	86	6
African American	13	76	11
Total	10	84	6

Latinos' knowledge of other clinical aspects of HIV disease varies. Just over half (53%) of Latinos know that having another STD such as herpes or gonorrhea *increases* a person's risk of HIV infection. Latinos (53%) were much more likely to know this than whites (38%), as were African Americans (54%). More than three-quarters (77%) of Latinos know that there are drugs available that can lengthen the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. However, less than half (44%) know that a pregnant woman who has HIV can take certain drugs to reduce the risk of her baby being born infected.

More than eight in ten (85%) Latinos know that a cure for HIV/AIDS does not yet exist. Latinos (85%) are as likely as African Americans (81%) and whites (91%) to know this fact. More than one-third of Latinos (34%) think that there is a vaccine available to prevent HIV or are not sure whether one exists, compared to 30% of African Americans and 17% of whites.

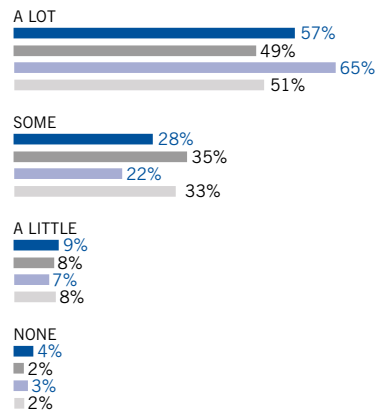
HIV-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Accurate information about how HIV is and is not transmitted is important for prevention, as well as efforts to reduce HIV-related stigma. Recent reports from the CDC and the Institute of Medicine suggest a correlation between HIV knowledge and stigma, with those who have lower levels of HIV-related knowledge being more likely to hold stigmatizing views of people living with HIV/AIDS.^{18,19} Other research has shown that people who fear HIV-related stigma and discrimination are less likely to seek information about prevention, and may delay being tested for HIV and entering care.^{20,21}

Latinos express concern about HIV-related stigma and discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS. More than one-third (36%) of Latinos say they would be "very" or "somewhat" concerned that people would think less of them if they found out they had been tested for HIV.

EXHIBIT 9
Percent Who Believe
There is Prejudice
and Discrimination
Against People Living
with HIV/AIDS, by
Race/Ethnicity

■ LATINO
■ WHITE
■ AFRICAN AMERICAN
■ TOTAL



Eighty-five percent (85%)* of Latinos say that prejudice and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS exist in the U.S. today. Overall, similar proportions of African Americans (87%)* and whites (84%)* say that discrimination exists; however, Latinos and African Americans are more likely than whites to believe that “a lot” of discrimination exists (57%, 65%, and 49%, respectively) (see exhibit 9). While two-thirds (67%) of Latinos say that such discrimination and prejudice has either stayed about the same or has decreased over the past five years, 29% say that such discrimination has gotten worse during this period.

More than eight in ten (83%) Latinos also say that access to HIV care and treatment in the U.S. is a problem. Nearly three-quarters (73%)* say that access is affected by income and 64%* say that access is affected by race. About one-half (49%)* say that access is affected by gender.

*Includes “a lot” and “some”

LATINOS WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HIV/AIDS

Latinos say they want more information about HIV/AIDS, with information about how to talk with children about HIV/AIDS (64%) at the top of the list. Among Latinos, women (69%) are more likely than men (58%) to say they want information about how to talk to children about HIV/AIDS. Significant numbers of Latinos also indicate a need for information about how to talk to a partner about HIV/AIDS (43%) and how to talk to one's doctor or health care provider (41%). Almost one-third (32%) of Latinos say they want more information about how to use condoms to protect against HIV. In general, Latinos and African Americans are significantly more likely than whites to say they need additional information about a range of HIV-related issues (see exhibit 10).

Latinos also want information about HIV testing (54%). Approximately two-thirds (65%) of Latinos say they want information about the different kinds of HIV tests available and 61% want information about what test results mean. The majority of Latinos also want information about the cost of testing (58%), where to go to get tested (56%), whether test results are confidential (55%), and whether they should get tested (53%) (see exhibit 11).

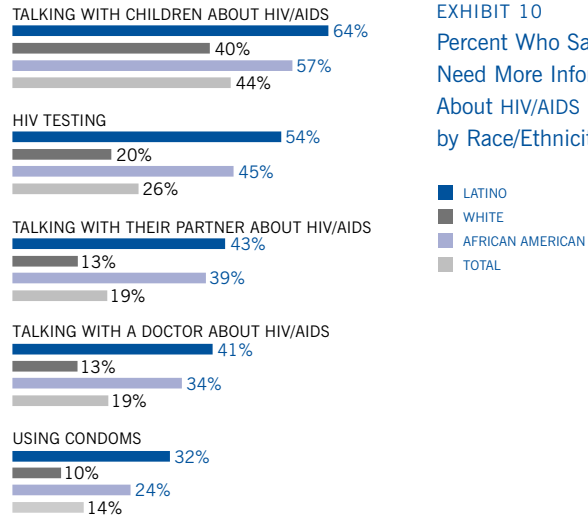


EXHIBIT 10
Percent Who Say They Need More Information About HIV/AIDS Issues, by Race/Ethnicity

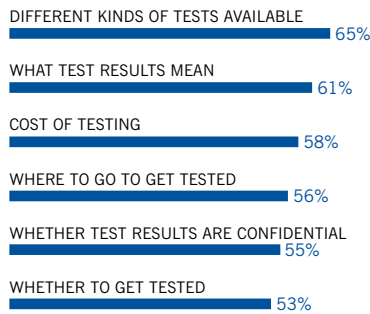


EXHIBIT 11
Percent of Latinos Who Say They Need the Following Information About HIV Testing...

LANGUAGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF HIV/AIDS

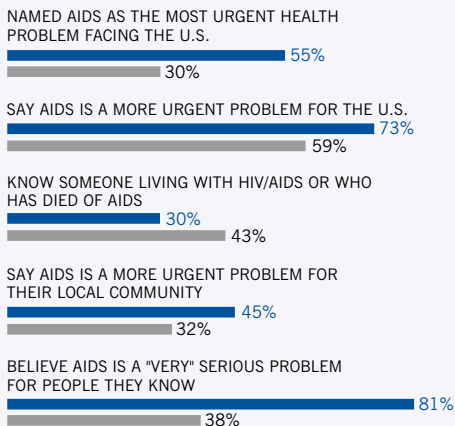
When given the choice of whether to interview in Spanish or English, 36% of Latino survey respondents requested that the interview be conducted in Spanish. This survey uncovered important differences in the views and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS based on language used in the interview. These differences could be related to several factors including: the more limited availability of Spanish language HIV information and programs; socio-economic factors such as income and education, which may also be related to language; and the Spanish translation of the survey, which could affect the meaning of questions for respondents.

LATINOS INTERVIEWED IN SPANISH EXPRESS GREATER CONCERN ABOUT HIV/AIDS

Latinos who interviewed in Spanish are significantly more likely to say AIDS is the number one health problem facing the U.S. compared to those who interviewed in English (55% compared to 30%). Spanish interviewees are also significantly more likely to say AIDS is a more urgent problem for the U.S. today than it was a few years ago (73% compared to 59% of those interviewed in English).

Whereas Latinos interviewed in Spanish are less likely to report knowing someone who is living with HIV/AIDS or has died of AIDS than those interviewed in English (30% compared to 43%), they are more likely to say that AIDS is a more urgent health problem for their local community today than a few years ago (45% vs. 32%) and are twice as likely to say that AIDS is a “very” serious problem for people they know (81% vs. 38%) (see exhibit 12).

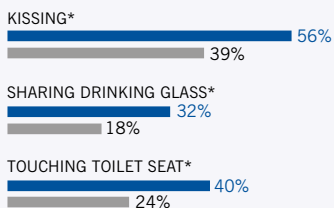
EXHIBIT 12
Latinos’ Sense of Urgency and Concern About the Epidemic in the U.S., by Language of Interview



HIV KNOWLEDGE VARIES BY LANGUAGE

Latinos interviewed in Spanish are significantly more likely to have misperceptions about the risk of infection through casual contact, compared to those who interviewed in English. For example, 56%, 32%, and 40% of those who interviewed in Spanish think that kissing, sharing a drinking glass, and touching a toilet seat, respectively, pose a risk of infection or are unsure about the risk of these activities, compared to 39%, 18%, and 24% of those who interviewed in English (see exhibit 13).

EXHIBIT 13
Latinos’ Perceptions of Risk Related to Very Low or No-Risk Activities, by Language of Interview



* Includes “yes” and “don’t know” responses

Those who interviewed in Spanish are less likely to know that there are drugs available that can lengthen the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS compared to Latinos who interviewed in English (68% compared to 83%), and are also more likely to say they didn't know if such drugs were available (16% said "don't know" compared to 6% of those interviewed in English). Compared to English interviewees, those who interviewed in Spanish are also much more likely to incorrectly believe that a vaccine for HIV already exists (8% of those interviewed in English compared to 25% of those interviewed in Spanish); and they are more likely to say they "don't know" if a vaccine exists (27% of those interviewed in Spanish compared to 15% of those interviewed in English).

In contrast, Spanish language interviewees are significantly more likely to know that having another STD such as herpes or gonorrhea *increases* a person's risk for HIV infection, compared to those who interviewed in English (64% compared to 47%).

SPANISH INTERVIEWEES EXPRESS GREATER NEED FOR HIV INFORMATION

Compared to those who interviewed in English, Spanish language interviewees express much greater need for information about a range of HIV-related issues, including: how to use condoms (24% of those interviewed in English compared to 46% of those interviewed in Spanish); how to talk to a partner (37% compared to 55%); how to talk to children (59% compared to 73%); HIV testing (49% compared to 64%); and how to talk to their doctor or health care provider about HIV/AIDS (31% compared to 59%).

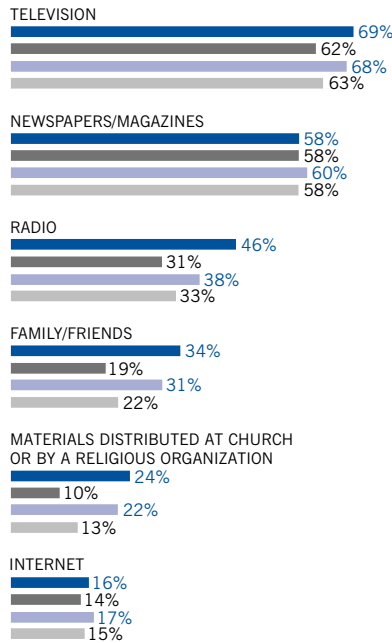
Sources of HIV information identified by Latinos vary somewhat by language used in the interview. Spanish language interviewees are more likely to cite the radio than English interviewees (55% compared to 41%) and church or religious organizations (32% compared to 20%). They are less likely to cite newspapers and magazines than English interviewees (48% compared to 64%) and less likely to have spoken to a doctor or health care provider (22% compared to 34%).

ENGLISH INTERVIEWEES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN TESTED AND TO FEAR STIGMA

Latinos who interviewed in English are more likely to report having been tested for HIV (50%), compared to those who interviewed in Spanish (32%). Of those who have been tested, Latinos who interviewed in English are also more likely to say they asked to be tested (49% compared to 25%).

Latinos who interviewed in English (46%) are more than twice as likely than those who interviewed in Spanish (18%) to express concern that others would think less of them if they found out they had been tested for HIV.

EXHIBIT 14
Percent Who Get Information About HIV/AIDS from the Following Sources, by Race/Ethnicity



WHERE LATINOS GET INFORMATION ABOUT HIV/AIDS

As is the case for the public as a whole, the news media continue to be Latinos' most common source of HIV/AIDS information, with more than two-thirds (69%) saying they rely on television for news and information about HIV/AIDS, and nearly six in ten (58%) saying they rely on newspapers and magazines. Latinos are more likely to rely on the radio for HIV information than whites or African Americans, with 46% of Latinos citing the radio as an information source, compared to 31% of whites and 38% of African Americans (see exhibit 14).

In addition to media sources, more than one-third (34%) of Latinos say that they rely on family members, friends or acquaintances for news and information about HIV/AIDS, and 16% rely on the Internet. One in four Latinos (24%) also relies on materials distributed at church or by a religious organization. Latinos (24%) are more than twice as likely as whites (10%) to get HIV information at church or from a religious organization, as are African Americans (22%).

Three in ten (30%) Latinos report having spoken to a doctor or other health care provider about HIV/AIDS. Of those who have talked to their doctor or health care provider, the majority (51%) report having raised the topic themselves. Issues discussed included getting tested for HIV (68%), how to prevent infection (67%) and their personal risk of contracting HIV (66%).

LATINOS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HIV TESTING AND THEIR TESTING BEHAVIOR

In recent years, policymakers and community leaders have begun to focus their attention on the issue of HIV testing in the hope of bringing into care the up to one-third of people living with HIV who are estimated to be unaware that they are infected.²² Such efforts are also designed to provide counseling and education about how to prevent the further transmission of HIV.

MANY LATINOS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN TESTED FOR HIV

More than four in ten (44%) Latinos say they have been tested for HIV, including 21% who were tested in the past 12 months. Of those who say they have been tested, 42% report it was because they asked to be tested, and 38% say a doctor or nurse told them the test was being done. These findings may overstate somewhat the actual rate of HIV testing among Latinos. For example, of those who say they have been tested, 16% believe incorrectly that HIV testing is a routine part of an exam. One-third (33%) also say they did not discuss their test results with a doctor, other medical professional or counselor, which could mean that they did not return for their test results or they tested at a site where counseling was optional.

WHY LATINOS DO AND DON'T GET TESTED

Other than donating blood, the reasons Latinos say they have been tested include: it was part of a pregnancy test (19%); it was part of a routine check up (13%); they felt that they were at risk from unprotected sex (13%); or because their doctor wanted them to get tested (11%). Of those who have *not* yet been tested for HIV, 53% did not get tested because they felt that they were not at risk, with 11% saying they did not know where to go to get tested and a similar number (11%) saying they fear needles or giving blood. One in five (20%) Latinos say they have not been tested for HIV due to concerns about confidentiality (see exhibit 15). Latinos (20%) are much more

likely than whites (6%) to express concern about the confidentiality of HIV test results. Seven in ten (70%) Latinos say that they would be “very” or “somewhat” likely to use an HIV test that does not require using a needle or taking blood, such as an oral HIV test.

WHERE LATINOS GO TO GET TESTED

Of Latinos who have been tested for HIV in the past year for reasons other than blood donation, most (41%) were tested in a health clinic or private doctor’s office (31%), with another 8% having been tested in an HIV clinic. Latinos (41%) and African Americans (37%) are much more likely than whites (21%) to report having been tested in a health clinic, suggesting that clinics may be a particularly important source of information and care for this group.

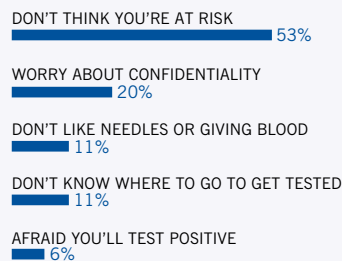


EXHIBIT 15
Reasons Latinos Give for
Not Having Been Tested
for HIV

PERCEPTIONS OF HIV/AIDS AND EXPERIENCES VARY BY INCOME AND EDUCATION

Perceptions of the epidemic and knowledge about HIV/AIDS among Latinos vary significantly by income and education. In part, this may reflect the fact that the HIV epidemic is increasingly concentrated in low-income communities in the United States. Researchers have also documented that those with lower incomes are less likely to have access to HIV treatment and medical care, compared to those with higher incomes.²³

For the purpose of this analysis, lower income Latinos are defined as those with annual incomes of \$20,000 or less, and those with less education are defined as those with a high school education or less (compared to those who have some college education). As a group, Latinos are disproportionately poor and have less education than the U.S. population overall.¹⁶

Latinos with less education and lower incomes (47% and 57%, respectively) were much more likely to interview in Spanish, compared to those with more education and higher incomes (14% and 19%, respectively).

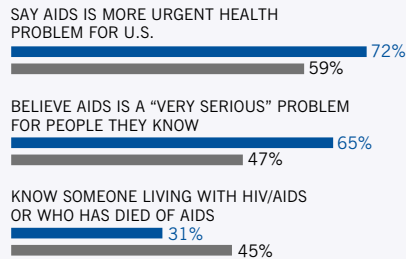
LATINOS WITH LOWER INCOMES AND LESS EDUCATION EXPRESS MORE CONCERN ABOUT HIV/AIDS

Latinos with lower incomes and those with less education (72% and 68%, respectively) are significantly more likely to say AIDS is a more urgent problem for the U.S. today than it was a few years ago, compared to their counterparts (59% and 55%, respectively). Those with lower incomes (65%) and less education (61%) are also more likely to say that AIDS is a “very” serious problem for people they know, compared to those with higher incomes and education levels (47% and 36%, respectively). In contrast, Latinos with higher incomes (45%) and more education (49%) are more likely to report knowing someone with HIV/AIDS or someone who has died of AIDS, compared to those with lower incomes (31%) and less education (34%) (see exhibit 16).

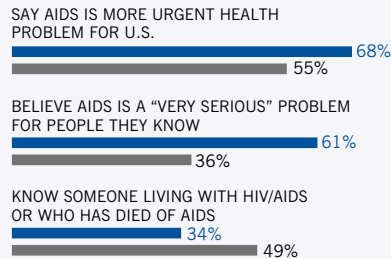
EXHIBIT 16
Latinos' Sense of Urgency and Concern About the Epidemic in the U.S., by Income and Education

■ \$20,000/YEAR OR LESS/
HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS
■ OVER \$20,000/YEAR/
SOME COLLEGE

BY INCOME



BY EDUCATION



MISPERCEPTIONS AND NEED FOR HIV INFORMATION ARE GREATER AMONG LATINOS WITH LESS EDUCATION

Latinos with less education (37%) are three times more likely to have misperceptions about the risk of contracting HIV through touching a toilet seat, and nearly twice as likely (27%) to not know that sharing a drinking glass does not pose a risk of infection (compared to 12% and 15% of those with more education, respectively). Those with less education are also more likely to say they need information about a range of HIV-related issues, including information about how to use condoms to protect against HIV (37% compared to 21%), how to talk to a partner about HIV/AIDS (47% compared to 34%), and how to talk to one's doctor or health care provider (46% compared to 30%).

Sources of HIV information vary somewhat by educational level. Latinos with more education are more likely to cite newspapers and magazines than those with less education (70% compared to 52%), more likely to have spoken to a doctor or health care provider about HIV/AIDS (37% compared to 26%), and more likely to have used the Internet (26% compared to 12%).

The survey does not indicate significant differences in knowledge of risk from casual contact and sources of HIV information by income. And while most information needs do not vary by income either, Latinos with lower incomes (40%) are more likely than those with higher incomes (27%) to say they need more information about how to use condoms to protect against HIV.

LATINOS WITH MORE EDUCATION MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN TESTED AND TO FEAR STIGMA

Latinos with more education (59%) are more likely to report having been tested than those with less education (37%), but self-reported testing rates do not vary significantly by income.

Those with higher levels of education (43%) are also more likely to express concern about others' views of them if they found out they had been tested compared to those with less education (32%).

SECTION III: LATINOS' VIEWS ON KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICY ISSUES

EXHIBIT 17
Views of the Efforts of Key Stakeholders in Helping to Solve the Problem of AIDS in the U.S., by Race/Ethnicity

	LATINO	WHITE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	TOTAL
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT				
Doing Enough	28%	23	15	22
Not Doing Enough	61%	65	77	66
STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT				
Doing Enough	32%	25	16	25
Not Doing Enough	59%	57	75	59
RELIGIOUS LEADERS/INSTITUTIONS				
Doing Enough	34%	27	30	28
Not Doing Enough	49%	47	58	49
PUBLIC SCHOOLS				
Doing Enough	41%	33	26	33
Not Doing Enough	49%	51	60	51
DOCTORS/HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS				
Doing Enough	58%	50	45	50
Not Doing Enough	37%	40	47	41
THE MEDIA				
Doing Enough	39%	38	31	38
Not Doing Enough	44%	44	51	45
PARENTS				
Doing Enough	32%	23	31	25
Not Doing Enough	63%	67	60	66
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES				
Doing Enough	45%	36	26	36
Not Doing Enough	43%	49	58	50
CORPORATE AMERICA/BUSINESS LEADERS				
Doing Enough	18%	14	9	14
Not Doing Enough	52%	54	72	56

Latinos say that many key stakeholders could be doing more in the fight against HIV/AIDS and a substantial number support increased federal spending on AIDS. A majority of Latinos also support a range of other policies, including HIV and sex education in the schools, access to sterile syringes, and efforts to address AIDS in Africa.

LATINOS WANT MORE OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Six in ten (61%) Latinos say the federal government is not doing enough to help solve the problem of AIDS in the U.S., with a similar majority (59%) saying that state and local governments are not doing enough. While nearly half (49%) of Latinos say that public schools should do more, a sizeable minority (41%) says that they are doing enough.

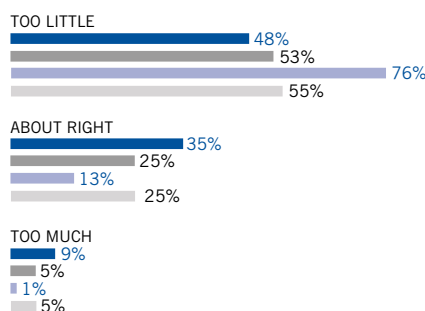
Latinos believe that some private sector stakeholders are not doing enough to solve the problem of AIDS in the U.S., including corporate America (52%) and religious leaders or institutions (49%). Latinos' have mixed views on the efforts of pharmaceutical companies, with 45% saying this group's efforts are sufficient and 43% saying they are not doing enough. A majority (58%) of Latinos feel that doctors and other health care providers are doing enough to fight AIDS (see exhibit 17).

SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL SPENDING AND PRIORITIES

Nearly half (48%) of Latinos say that the federal government is spending too little money on AIDS, with 35% saying current spending is about right. This is similar to the proportion of whites (53%) who say that the federal government is spending too little (see exhibit 18). Relative to the amount of federal spending on other health problems, four in ten (41%) Latinos believe that federal spending on AIDS is too low.

When asked their views of federal priorities related to HIV/AIDS, Latinos say that AIDS prevention and education (91%), research to find a vaccine (87%), and AIDS treatment and care (86%) should be "very important" priorities.

EXHIBIT 18
Views of How Much the Federal Government is Spending on AIDS, by Race/Ethnicity



SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC HIV-RELATED POLICIES

High School Sex Education. Almost all Latinos say high school sex education classes should include information about how HIV and other STDs are spread (96%) and how to protect against HIV and other STDs (96%). Ninety-two percent (92%) of Latinos also say that information about how to use condoms as protection against HIV and other STDs should be taught in high school. At least 90% of the general public supports such policies and recent surveys of teachers, parents, students, and principals indicate similar support for such efforts among these groups.²⁴

Syringe Access. A majority (61%) of Latinos favor needle exchange programs, which offer clean needles to intravenous (IV) drug users in exchange for used needles to help stop the spread of HIV. Nearly two-thirds (64%) also support a change in federal law to allow state and local governments to decide for themselves whether to use their federal HIV prevention funding for needle exchange programs. In addition to supporting needle exchange programs, a majority of Latinos support allowing IV drug users to purchase clean needles from licensed pharmacists (61%) and allowing doctors and physicians to provide IV drug users with a prescription for clean needles (67%).

AIDS in Africa. The global HIV/AIDS epidemic has particularly affected Africa, where most people with HIV/AIDS live and most AIDS deaths have occurred.²⁵ There is strong support among Latinos for efforts to address the impact of AIDS in Africa. Three-quarters (77%) of Latinos favor U.S. spending to help solve the problem of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Half (51%) say that the U.S. government should do more in this region of the world.

CONCLUSION

Twenty years into the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Latinos express considerable urgency about HIV/AIDS, personally, for the nation, and for the world. Concern is highest among Latinos with less education, lower incomes, and those interviewed in Spanish. Many Latinos say they want more information about a range of HIV-related issues. A majority support a variety of HIV-related policies, including policies to expand access to sterile syringes and provide information about HIV and other STDs in public schools.

The sense of urgency among Latinos is significantly greater than that expressed by whites and the public overall. However, the percentage of Latinos who rank AIDS as the number one health issue facing the nation has declined over the past several years, as it has for whites and African Americans. This may reflect the decline in the number of AIDS-related deaths in the U.S., or a beginning sign of “AIDS fatigue.” In either case, it raises important challenges for policymakers and community leaders attempting to address AIDS in its third decade. The response to the epidemic will also depend on how high HIV/AIDS is placed on the public policy agenda relative to other important policy issues that topped the public’s priority list for federal dollars on other polls conducted at about the same time as this one, such as education, Social Security, and Medicare. A key issue is whether support for addressing HIV/AIDS will translate into the resources needed to respond to new challenges in the epidemic at home and abroad. The current crisis resulting from September 11th will of course make it much more difficult for HIV or any other issue to compete for resources and for Congressional and Presidential attention.

Because Latinos now comprise the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States, the prevalence of serious health problems such as HIV/AIDS among Latinos will increasingly affect the health status of the nation. In responding to HIV/AIDS among Latinos, public health officials, community leaders, and policymakers will need to recognize the rich diversity that exists within this community. Such diversity is reflected in the differences in Latinos’ views of the epidemic described in this report, and speaks to the importance of ongoing efforts to examine such views over time.

METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in this report are based on the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's National Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS, a nationally representative survey of adults 18 and older. The full survey findings, including the questionnaire and survey data, were published in *The AIDS Epidemic at 20 Years: The View From America*, which can be found on the Foundation's website at www.kff.org. The survey was designed by staff at the Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA), and analysis was conducted by staff at the Foundation and Regina Aragón. Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by PSRA between August 14, 2000 and October 26, 2000. Interviews were conducted with 2,683 adults including 549 Latinos and 431 African Americans. Latinos and African Americans were oversampled to allow for analyses across race and ethnicity and within these two populations. Interviews were completed in both English and Spanish according to the preferences of the respondent.

SAMPLE DESIGN AND SURVEY PROCEDURES

The sample was designed to generalize to all adults in continental U.S. telephone households, and to allow separate analyses of responses by Latino and African American respondents. The sample was based on a list-assisted random-digit dialing (RDD) sample of telephone numbers and was drawn using a stratified design so that the final sample of completed interviews would contain a disproportionately large number of Latino and African American respondents.

WEIGHTING AND STATISTICAL PRECISION

Weighting was used to adjust for the effects of the sample design as well as to adjust for minor differences between the set of complete interviews and the populations they represent due to survey nonresponse. The weighting methodology allows for representation across the population overall, including by race/ethnicity, as well as within racial and ethnic groups. The demographic weighting parameters were derived from a special analysis of the March 1999 Current Population Survey.

The margin of sampling error is +/-2% for the total sample; +/-6% for Latinos; +/-3% for whites; and +/-7% for African Americans and may be larger for certain subsets presented in the analysis. The margin of sampling error includes an adjustment for the design effect, which reflects the specialized sampling design and post-data collection statistical adjustments.

RESPONSE RATE

A survey's response rate estimates the proportion of eligible respondents in the sample that were successfully interviewed. The final response rate is 46%. PSRA's sample disposition codes and rate formulas comply with standards set by the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

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