

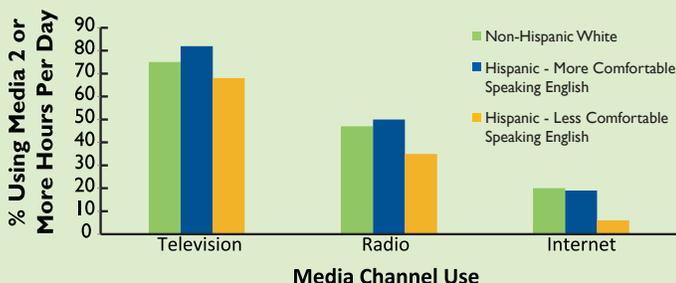
## Trust and Use of Media for Health Information among U.S. Hispanics

It has been well documented that some population segments—particularly those with lower socioeconomic status—experience knowledge gaps related to their health and their health care and often have difficulty accessing and using information that could help to reduce and prevent an unequal burden of disease. This may be especially relevant for Hispanic populations living in the United States because of well-established language, cultural, and media use challenges.

Studies have shown that despite overall increases in the use of the Internet and wireless and mobile technologies, a “digital divide” persists in the United States between Hispanics and other population groups—not only because of some lingering access issues, but also because of barriers to utilization. Moreover, a recent U.S. Census report indicates that among Hispanics who reported speaking Spanish at home, only about one-half said they speak English “very well.” Such data suggest that the pervasive disparities in media use and media access experienced by many Hispanics may be exacerbated by a limited availability of bilingual materials.

To address disparities in health information access, and to reach linguistically isolated populations, public health professionals must better understand how U.S. Hispanics use health information—and what types of information they trust—within the vast and changing media landscape.

### Use of Television, Radio, and Internet among Non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics, by Language Ability

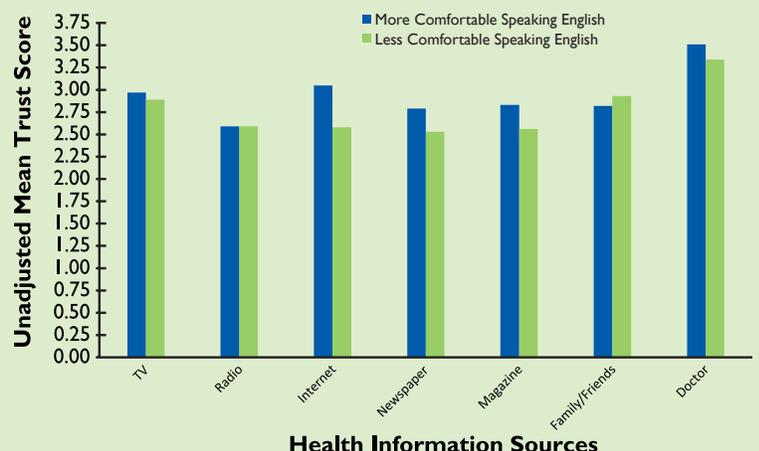


Data Source: Health Information National Trends Survey, 2005 (HINTS, 2005)

## Quick Facts

- Hispanics are currently the largest ethnic/racial minority group in the United States.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 45.5 million Americans (15 percent of the U.S. population) identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino in 2007.
- Hispanics experience significant health disparities, demonstrating higher rates of chronic disease and lower use of available cancer screening.
- A “digital divide” exists between U.S. Hispanics and other population segments despite general increases in the use of the Internet and mobile technologies.
- Hispanics who are not comfortable speaking English use television, radio, and the Internet to seek health information less frequently than whites and Hispanics who are comfortable speaking English.

### U.S. Hispanics' Trust in Health Information Sources, by Language Ability



Data Source: Health Information National Trends Survey, 2005 (HINTS, 2005)

## English Language Ability of U.S. Hispanics Differs by Socioeconomic Status (SES)

In a 2010 research study using HINTS 2005 data, investigators found several differences in key sociodemographic characteristics between U.S. Hispanics who were more comfortable speaking English and those who were less comfortable speaking English.

### Income

Of Hispanic respondents who were less comfortable speaking English, 62 percent reported annual incomes of less than \$25,000, while only 35 percent of other Hispanics and 20 percent of non-Hispanic whites had incomes below \$25,000.

### Education

More than one-half (57 percent) of respondents who were less comfortable speaking English reported having less than a high school education compared to 21 percent of Hispanics who were comfortable speaking English and 9 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

### Health Insurance

Only 36 percent of respondents who were less comfortable speaking English reported having health insurance compared to 76 percent of those who were more comfortable speaking English and 89 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

## For U.S. Hispanics, Media Use Drives Trust in Health Information Sources

In the same 2010 research study using HINTS, investigators examined the sociodemographic and media use characteristics of U.S. Hispanics to determine which factors have the most influence on trust in health information sources.

After controlling for SES and other possible predictors of trust, they found that media use had the most influence on trust in health information sources, with more media use associated with higher levels of trust. However, investigators also saw significant differences in media use by comfort speaking English, wherein Hispanics who were less comfortable with English reported less television, Internet, and newspaper use.

These data signal an information access gap among Hispanics with less fluency in English, especially in the English-dominant Internet. Closing that access gap is important for ensuring that linguistically isolated populations receive adequate exposure to health information.

## How Can This Inform Your Work?

HINTS data show that U.S. Hispanics who are not comfortable speaking English and Hispanics with lower socioeconomic status use media differently than others. This is particularly important in the design and dissemination of health promotion messages. Hispanics who are less comfortable speaking English also are disadvantaged socioeconomically and have less exposure to health messages distributed through traditional channels.

Health communication practitioners can ensure their health promotion messages reach the intended audience by:

- Creating bilingual and culturally appropriate messages.
- Considering aural and visual channels such as radio and television for health promotion messages.
- Using interpersonal channels of communication (i.e., health care providers, family, and friends) in addition to translated print materials for outreach to Hispanics.

### About HINTS

<http://hints.cancer.gov>

<http://www.facebook.com/ncihints>

<http://www.twitter.com/NCIHINTS>

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) fielded the first Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS) in 2002 and 2003, surveying 6,369 Americans. Subsequent surveys followed in 2005 (5,586 Americans surveyed) and 2008 (7,674 Americans surveyed). HINTS was created to monitor changes in the rapidly evolving field of health communication. The survey data can be used to understand how adults use different communication channels to obtain health information for themselves and their loved ones, and to create more effective health communication strategies across populations.

HINTS Briefs provide a snapshot of noteworthy, data-driven research findings. They introduce population-level estimates for specific questions in the survey and summarize significant research findings that are a result of analyzing how certain demographic characteristics influence specific outcomes. Many Briefs summarize research findings from recent peer-reviewed journal articles using HINTS data.

## For More Information on Cancer

- Call the NCI Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER
- Visit <http://cancer.gov>
- Order NCI publications at <https://pubs.cancer.gov/>
- Visit [Facebook.com/cancer.gov](https://www.facebook.com/cancer.gov) and <http://www.youtube.com/ncigov>

## References Used in This HINTS Brief

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Shin, H. B., & Bruno, R. (2003). Language use and English-speaking ability: 2000 (No. Census 2000 Brief, C2KBR-29). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

