



Linguistic Disparities to Access and Quality of Healthcare: A Research Review

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Introduction

- Discordant language patient-health care professional relationships are a major factor in determining healthcare access.
- In the US, individuals with limited English proficiency (**LEP**) face a variety of healthcare access disparities.
- For this project, we will focus on Spanish-speaking LEPs.
- Since 37.3% of US Latino adults and 30% of California adults have LEP, and many of these are Spanish-speaking, such disparities are a significant issue.



Overview of LEP health barriers - Miscommunication

- Green and Nze (2017): Brazilian LEP patient who entered the ED with renal failure
 - Doctors were unable to determine the cause of his symptoms
 - Turned out he had acute nephritis caused by use of NSAIDs, but did not report this medication due to not understanding the English terminology
 - Doctors assumed an interpreter would not be available and thus assumed a standby position
 - If an interpreter was on hand, the root cause could have been determined earlier
- Why can't we use family or relatives?
- Or non-medical grade professional interpreters?



The Accuracy Issue

- AVOID family members and non-professionals for interpretation - high error rates even when fluent (Nápoles et al. 2015)
- Accessibility of these translating professionals?
- Government Policies exist: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- Requires health services to have medical-competent interpreters available (United States, Department of Justice)
- The problem is that it's poorly enforced
- ED sample study reports 85% LEPs not provided adequate translation source



Overview of LEP health barriers - Statistical cases

Studies have found a wide variety of barriers to healthcare access in Spanish speakers with LEP, including

- Poor patient-physician relationships
- Poor self-reported health outcomes
- Longer delays in receiving care
- Increased chance of diagnostic errors
- Less likely to have a personal primary care physician (PCP)
- More likely to use safety-compromised medication
- Greater chance of less preventative practice!



Proposed solutions

- Implement policies targeting effective language accommodation
 - Expand health care coverage
 - Reduce mobility barriers
 - Increase Spanish-speaking PCP programs
 - Increase training of medical interpreters
 - Increase access to medical-grade training, in undergrad or medical schools
 - Enforcement of Title VI LEP clause



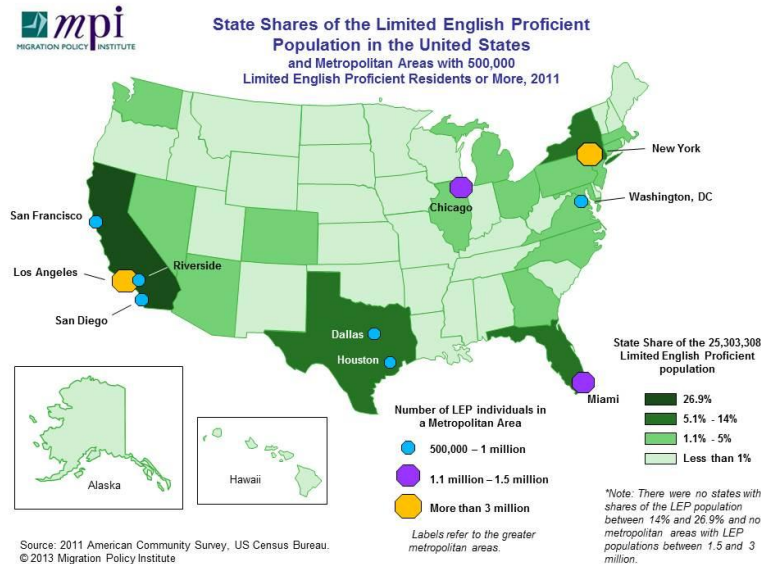
LEP solutions - The liability question

- Medical language electronic device translators are an emerging tool
- But if an error arises, liability is unclear
- Therefore, lawmakers and hospital owners are hesitant to use it



Future Research

- Reassess known health disparities in areas where interventions have been implemented for a long period
 - e.g. In an area with prevalent Spanish-speaking PCPs, measure likelihood of LEP Spanish speakers having a personal PCP



Acknowledgement

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Thank You