

Improving use of sexual and reproductive services in rural Oregon: Perspectives of Latino men and health care providers

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: health practitioners, sexual and reproductive health providers, students of public health, policy makers

ABSTRACT: Little research compares client and health provider perspectives on the need and use of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. Even fewer studies examine the needs of rural Latino men, a growing population that is disproportionately at risk for unintended pregnancies and HIV/STIs. This study examined the SRH needs of Latino men living in rural Oregon. In-depth interviews with Latino men (n=49) explored factors that shaped needs and use of SRH services. Interviews with 24 SRH providers explored the use of SRH services and the influence of social, cultural, organizational factors. Data were triangulated using a modified grounded theory approach. Comparing perspectives of men and providers identified key differences and similarities in how SRH services are culturally interpreted and communicated. Both emphasized the role of “machismo” in challenging communication about sexual health. However, men's definitions of machismo varied widely, and most men did not identify as “machista.” Men's narratives revealed that talking about sex with their parents and friends affected their willingness to discuss SRH services with providers. Providers used “indirect communication” as a strategy to discuss SRH and navigate difficult conversations about infidelity, sex under the influence of drugs and alcohol, sex with sex workers, and HIV/STI testing.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- To compare providers' and heterosexually-active Latino men's perceptions of sexual and reproductive health needs and services.
- To identify social, cultural and organizational facilitators and barriers in men's interactions and communication about sexual risk and family planning with health providers and family.

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