

Spanish-Speaking Latinos Excluded From Alzheimer's Clinical Trials

Language barriers and a lack of diverse health care workers may be at fault.

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Latinos are almost twice as likely to develop [Alzheimer's disease](#) and other related [dementias](#) compared with non-Latino white people. Despite this, Latinos are often underrepresented in clinical trials related to these conditions, according to a presentation at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference earlier this month.

Latinos made up only 3% of the 3,300 patients enrolled in two large [clinical trials](#) for Alzheimer's treatment in 2021, according to the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Drug and Evaluation and Research Drug Trials Snapshots Summary Report of 2021.

"[Spanish-speaking](#) older Latinos are typically excluded from scientific research because they don't speak English, and that puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to brain health equity," said Adriana Perez, a Leonard Davis Institute (LDI) senior fellow and Penn Nursing associate professor [at the conference](#).

Perez continued to say that Latino patients want to take part in research but are often excluded due to language barriers. After conducting a series of focus groups in North Philadelphia, Perez found that 85% of Latino participants were willing to participate in clinical trials but were discouraged when they saw English proficiency as a requirement.

"[Latinos] want to contribute to the overall goal of research," Perez said. "They want to benefit from the scientific advancements because they know this is a big health issue and so many themselves have a family member with Alzheimer's disease."

Lack of representation among health care providers is another issue Latinos face. In the United States, Latinos make up a large proportion of health aides and nursing assistants but a much smaller share of higher-level health care providers.

"The growth of Spanish-speaking nurses has not tracked with the rate of growth of Latinos in the U.S. The same could be said for physicians and clinical psychologists as we continue to identify the real critical issues to address in relation to brain health equity," Perez said.

To learn more, read "[Language Barriers Up the Risk of Poor Health Outcomes for Older Latinos.](#)"

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