

Acculturation influences smoking cessation by Latino men

December 3 2009

Latino men who are more adapted to U.S. culture are more likely to quit smoking than their less-accultured counterparts, according to research by scientists at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center published in the December issue of *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, which has a special emphasis on tobacco.

The researchers found that acculturation has no effect on the likelihood of Latinos quitting smoking. The study of 271 Latino smokers who called a Spanish-language smoking cessation Quitline examined the influence of gender and indicators of acculturation on the ability to quit smoking.

The number of years and the proportion of life spent in the United States, along with English preference for watching news and television programs, were positively related to smoking cessation for men.

"Successful tobacco control efforts must place a special emphasis on reaching Latinos and other underserved groups who have greater difficulty quitting and less access to pharmacological or behavioral treatment," said lead author Yessenia Castro, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow in M. D. Anderson's Department of Health Disparities Research. "Our findings indicate that smoking cessation outreach to Latinos also needs to take into account male smokers who have lived in the United States for short periods and who prefer Spanish."

While the researchers uncovered important acculturation-related

predictors of smoking cessation, Castro says cultural adaptation probably affects smoking indirectly by influencing other important variables, such as levels of stress, social support, feelings of competency or depression.

"It's critically important for us to understand the mechanisms by which acculturation affects smoking," Castro said. "It's these variables that can and should be targeted in treatment." Castro, senior author David Wetter, Ph.D., professor and chair of Health Disparities, and colleagues are addressing that issue with a long-term cohort study of Mexican-origin smokers.

"Advancing knowledge in these areas can help identify treatment targets, improve current smoking cessation interventions and ultimately aid in eliminating smoking-related [health disparities](#) among Latinos," Castro said. "This information can be used to guide tobacco control efforts and media campaigns."

Earlier studies had shown that both acculturation and gender influence smoking prevalence among Latinos, but little was known about their effects on [smoking cessation](#).

Castro and colleagues initially examined six acculturation factors: years in the United States, proportion of life lived in the United States, immigrant/non-immigrant status, language spoken at home, language spoken at work, and preferred media language. Of those, only language spoken at home and at work were not significant. Data indicated differences by gender in the four remaining areas.

Follow-up analyses indicated no acculturation impact for women, and significant effects for men in years and life proportion spent in the [United States](#) and preference for English as the media language.

For example, men who had been in the country for up to five years had

about 20 percent abstinence rate at the three-month follow-up point after participating in the Quitline program. But more than 35 percent of men who had been in the U.S. for 23-76 years abstained.

Those who preferred to view news and entertainment mainly or exclusively in English had a 48 percent abstinence rate after three months, while 20 percent of those who preferred Spanish were still not smoking.

Source: University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Acculturation influences smoking cessation by Latino men (2009, December 3)
retrieved 4 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-12-acculturation-cessation-latino-men.html>

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