



Developing a Health Communication Campaign to Improve Patient Provider Communication

Formative Research Findings

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Team

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 - Director of Community Engaged Research, iREACH
- Other partners in External Affairs, Office of Health Equity, Community Health, and Primary Care

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ChristianaCare

- Level I trauma center -- 3 Delaware hospital campuses and 1 in Maryland
- Primary care and specialty practices throughout Delaware and neighboring states
- Non-profit, teaching hospital with over 260 residents
- Largest private employer in Delaware; 2nd largest overall
- FY2019:
 - 255,513 Primary Care physician office visits
 - 53,121 hospital admissions
 - 195,602 Emergency Department visits
 - 6,035 births
 - 37,3909 surgical procedures



Background

- Poor patient-provider communication increases risk of adverse health outcomes
- Lower health literacy decreases patient engagement and communication
- Teach-back method associated with improved patient health literacy and disease management, and reduced adverse outcomes

Pignone et al. Literacy and health outcomes: is adherence the missing link? *Journal of General Internal Medicine*.

Flores et al. Language barriers to health care in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Griffey et al.. Is low health literacy associated with increased emergency department utilization and recidivism? *Academic Emergency Medicine*.

Teach back intervention. *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality*



Health Communication

- Health communication campaigns can be effective interventions in changing norms, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors
- Given accessibility to patients of all health literacy levels, health communication campaigns can be effectively harnessed to improve outcomes and care



Study Aims

- To develop and evaluate a multi-media campaign to increase health literacy among ChristianaCare patients
 - Use formative research to test messages and obtain additional data for campaign tailoring
 - Assess campaign impacts on patient health literacy, understanding of teach-back, and patient-provider communication



Methods

- Virtual focus groups and patient survey
- Patient recruitment from clinical and non-clinical spaces via flyer and outreach
- Survey included demographic (sex, age, race, ethnicity, marital status) and health literacy questions (BRIEF health literacy measure)



Methods

- 4 focus groups (n=17): 3 in English and 1 in Spanish
 - Section 1: Campaign Message Feedback
 - 6 campaign messages presented, rated, and discussed
 - Section 2: Facilitators & Barriers to Patient-Provider Communication
 - Patient experiences, challenges, and successes communicating with provider
- Team based qualitative analysis and descriptive statistics using SPSS



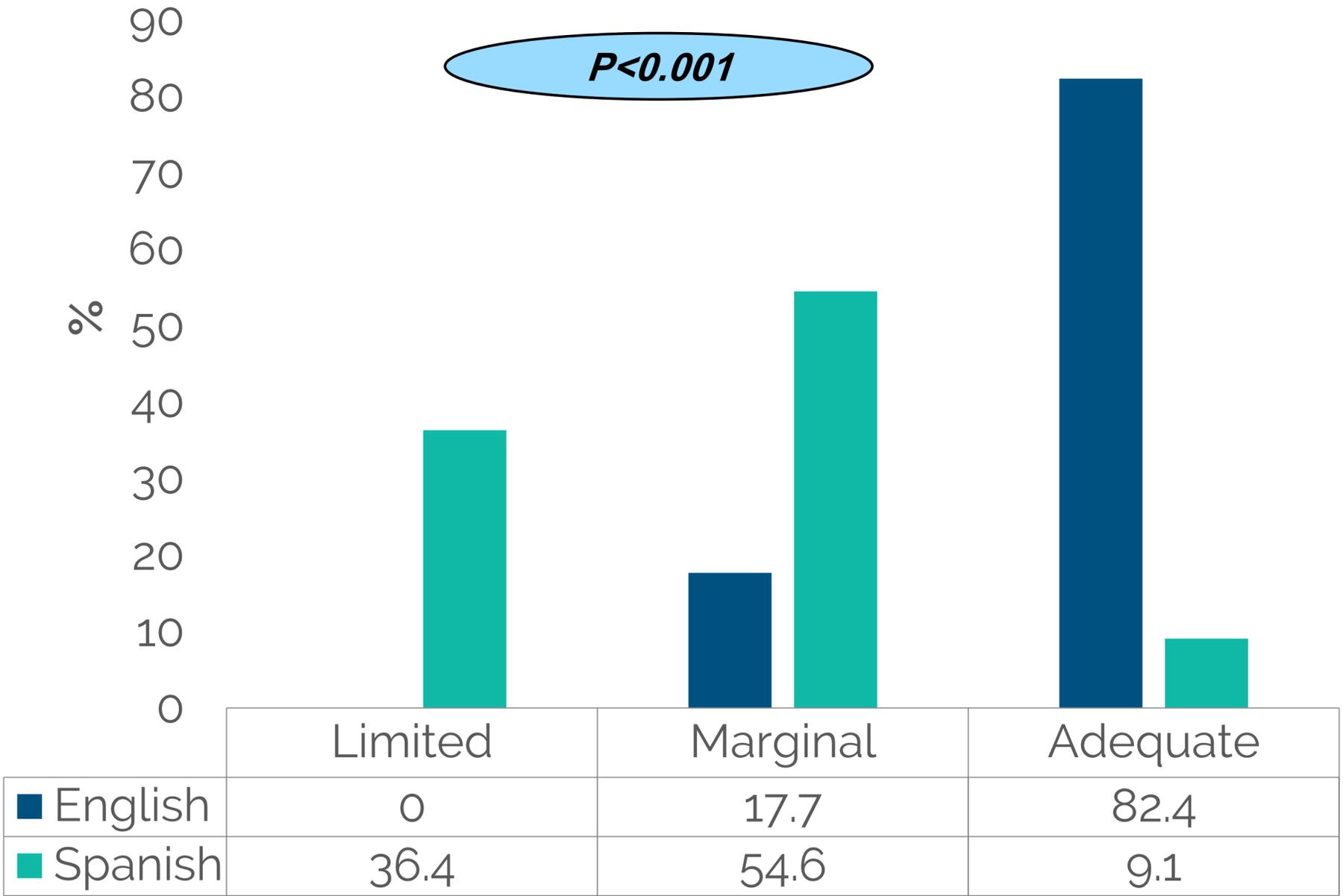
Results

- Survey Participants (N=28)
 - English (n=17; 60.7%)
 - Spanish (n=11; 39.3%)
- Mean Age of Participants (SD; Min-Max)
 - English: 56.9 (15.3; 25-77)
 - Spanish: 36.8 (9.0; 23-53)
- Majority of participants in both groups identified as Female (88% English; 91% Spanish)
- 45% of Spanish-speakers had completed high school, had a GED or equivalent
- Spanish-speakers had a significantly higher proportion of uninsured (64% Spanish; $p < 0.001$)

Results

BRIEF Health Literacy Measure

- 4 questions with 5-pt Likert
- Limited health literacy (4-12)
- Marginal health literacy (13-16)
- Adequate health literacy (17-20)





Campaign Message Feedback

“Were we clear? Let us hear by explaining back what you heard.”

- 57% rated this message “Green” (*Message clear. Use this message*)
- Some of the feedback about **what worked** with this message:
 - *“So, it's a great sentence and it's clear and I understood it. ” [English Group]*
 - *“It's direct, upfront, without paraphrasing; it's good, direct, and clear. [Spanish Group]*
- **Suggestions from participants incorporated into a revised message:**

“Were we clear? Let us hear!”



Campaign Message Feedback

“It’s your health, your story. Now is a good time. Just ask.”

- 53% rated message as “Green” (*Message clear. Use this message*);
- Some of the feedback of **what did or did not work**:
 - *“I voted green. I liked the phrase, but I think they could have said, it's your health. Just ask short and sweet. .” [English Group]*
 - *“It could be confusing” [English Group]*
 - *“Well, it would depend. That would be used for, for what? Depending on what it is used for, it would be clear already or not.” [Spanish Group]*
- **Suggestions from participants incorporated into a revised message:**

“Have questions? Just ask! It’s your health.”



Facilitators of Patient-Provider Communication

Theme 1: Consistency and duration of provider relationship

“That's why you got to get to know your patient and have a relationship with them so that you can kind of break that wall down for those patients that are afraid to ask for help.”

Theme 2: Positive provider behaviors (instilling trust and confidence)

“that's what it also comes down to, is definitely that doctor making you feel secure enough to ask those questions ”



Barriers to Patient-Provider Communication

Theme 1: Prior issues with poor communication

“So I'm like, granted, I hear what you're saying. I get that you're trying to make me feel comfortable. But a little bit of damage has already been done by a previous doctor. So I'm not asking you anything.”

Theme 2: Patient self-limiting beliefs

“Because sometimes there are much simpler people who don't want to ask because they're embarrassed, and they remain with doubts on how they need to take their medication or perhaps it depends on what the illness is...”



Lessons Learned

- Tailoring messages around patient feedback key to engagement
- Additional areas of intervention focusing on provider behaviors may be necessary to advance communication loop
- Success of formative research during pandemic was truly a collaborative effort across key stakeholder groups
- Virtual focus groups during a pandemic -- not without its challenges
 - Zoom technical issues resulted in decreased participation during 1st focus group
- Next steps include process evaluation and launching post campaign surveys to determine reach of campaign messages



Were we clear? Let us hear!

When you get information about your health, **tell your care team** what you heard in your own words.



Have questions?

Just
Ask!



It's **your** health.





Thank You!

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