

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
SOUTHWEST CENTER FOR PRE-EVENT MESSAGING

SECONDARY ANALYSIS RESULTS

CHEMICAL AGENTS

HISPANIC

Language:

The participants reflected the community variance very well in that a great diversity of linguistic capabilities was present. Most were bilingual. However, like the real community, some participants were most fluent in English and only slightly so in Spanish and vice versa. While this may seem obvious, the practical application of it relates to the need to have multiple levels of information across the two languages. "Bilingual" is not a single point of fluency, but reflects a wide range of capability that constitutes a large window for miscommunication.

Education:

Generally lower than the mainstream American population. Some of the participants were immigrants with and without formal education.

SES:

As with most minority or immigrant populations, SES is generally lower than the mainstream society.

Communications:

Related to language proficiency is one's acculturation status. Immigrants typically experience a learning curve for the new cultural place. However, this is a process of culture learning that is unending (as with all people). The result is that many immigrants are transitional in their acculturation experience. They are still very expert with their home culture and becoming more fluid in the "host" culture. They are also adept at situational use of their multicultural skills.

Spokespersons:

The primary person noted was the US President without recourse to a multitude of other possible government spokespersons. It may be that those that are recent immigrants have a more narrow knowledge of the range of possible

government authorities or that the (presumably sought after) new homeland is characterized in more monolithic ways compared to lifelong Americans.

#### Communication Pathways:

Personalism is present in these participants as a “best” type of interaction. The anonymous, sterile mass communications approach is not preferred. The participants prefer direct contact/communications with emergency personnel. Regarding language, information from broadcasts will be sought in both English and Spanish to conduct what is analogous to reliability and validity cross-checking.

#### Information Dissemination:

Gender preferences for the male as the primary communicator and decision-maker were noted. Gender preferences related to role performance is notable in all cultures as is pragmatic variance from the social “ideal.”

#### Cultural Models of Protective Actions:

The use of “folk medicines” was noted as a more accessible means of treatment and protection compared to the technically produced pharmaceuticals. There was also a note that suggested drinking large quantities of water to flush out the toxins. Another note was that fruit was recommended as a treatment agent because it would help the body rid itself of toxins more rapidly than if fruit was not ingested. Also, an extrapolation was made from folklore that “explained” how the rich survived the plague because they ate from silver table ware. The silver would leach into the body and kill the plague microorganism. The extrapolation to chemical agents was that there may be “home remedies” accessible to those more distant to mainstream America, its advantaged position, and economic base. Also, it may reflect the sense of unfair advantage that those around them (i.e., the advantaged American) would inherently have. Last, the cultural value of “cleanliness” is noted as it is by cultural researchers across many Hispanic derived populations. The value is that the concept of “cleanliness” operates in some ways beyond the objective measure of what is “clean.” By extension, “cleanliness” is protective in many pervasive ways.