

LatinosAgainst Alzheimer's

we can stop it by 2020.

LATINOS & ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: THE GROWING CRISIS

LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's Issue Brief

ISSUE OVERVIEW Latinos represent the fastest growing older adult population in the United States, with a life expectancy projected to increase from age 80 to 87 by 2050, increasing the Latino segment of the nation's elderly population from five percent today to 16 percent.ⁱ As the U.S. Latino population ages, a growing number of Latino communities and families will be disrupted by Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually even the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. It is the most common cause of dementia in older people but is not a normal part of the aging process. **Alzheimer's is a fatal disease and, currently, there is no cure.** The projected growth of Alzheimer's coupled with the dramatic growth of the Latino population poses a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of the Latino community, the nation's largest minority group.

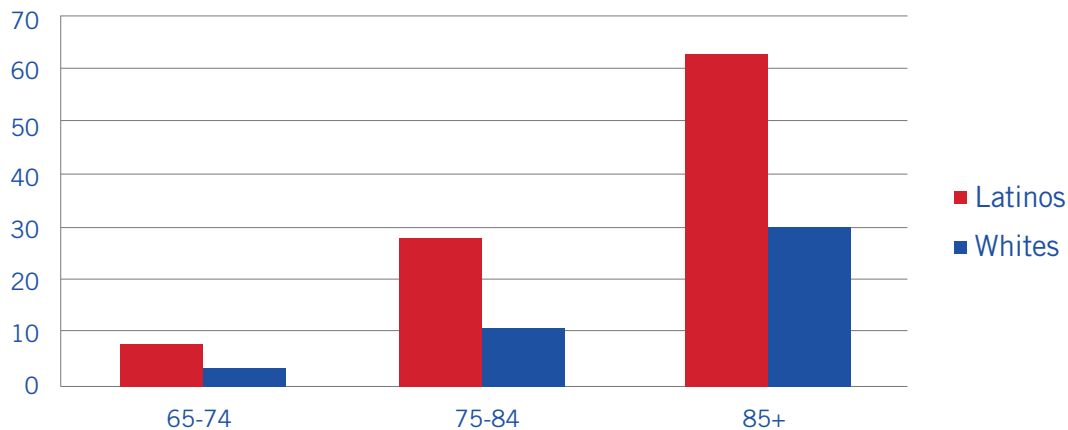
As the Alzheimer's epidemic grows, it is critical for policymakers, healthcare service providers, and community stakeholders to understand and address the unique challenges that the disease poses to the Latino community. Targeted research, policy solutions, and increased community awareness and engagement are essential. To facilitate this understanding and to catalyze action against Alzheimer's in the Latino community, USAgainstAlzheimer's launched LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's, the nation's first-ever coalition of Latino advocacy organizations focused on raising awareness of Alzheimer's as an urgent health issue within the Latino community. This issue brief is an educational resource that frames the impact of Alzheimer's on the Latino community and outlines why action is imperative.

RISK FACTORS The leading risk factors for Alzheimer's are advancing age, race, and family history. According to the Centers for Disease Control, between 2000 and 2010, the death rate for Alzheimer's disease increased 39 percent.ⁱⁱ

Latinos are 1.5 times more likely than non-Latino whites to develop Alzheimer's disease, in part, due to increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and stroke—all additional risk factors for Alzheimer's and other dementias.

PERCENTAGE OF OLDER ADULTS AGES 65+ WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OR RELATED DEMENTIA

(Washington Heights—Inwood Columbia Aging Project, 2006)



A study focused on Mexican Americans, the largest Latino demographic in the U.S., found that type 2 diabetes and hypertension contributed more to dementia in this ethnic subgroup than in the white population. Researchers found that 43 percent of study participants who had dementia also had diabetes.ⁱⁱⁱ

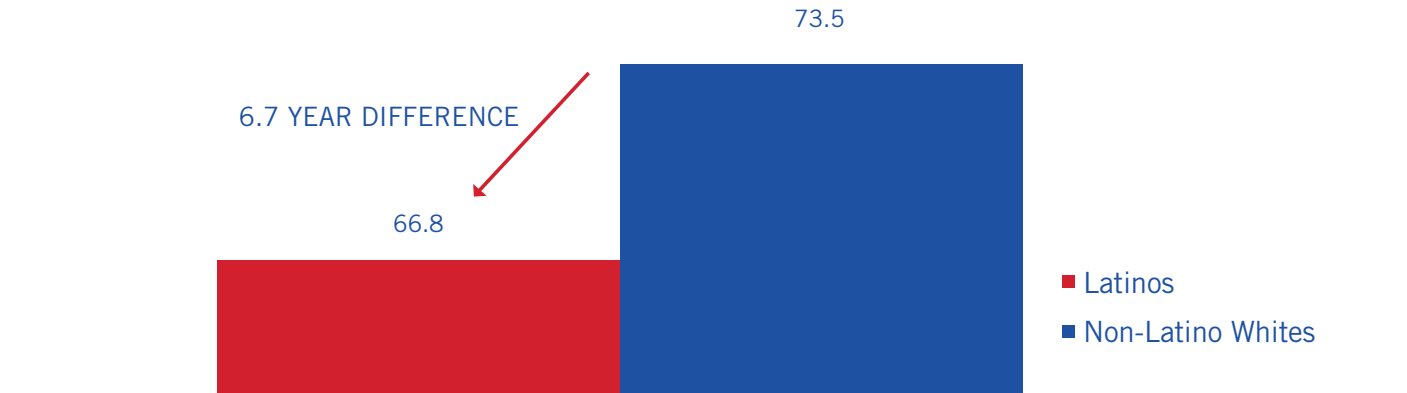
According to a 2012 report issued by the Roundtable on the Promotion of Health Equity and the Elimination of Health Disparities, health disparities between Latinos and other populations have not improved over the last decade.^{iv} This trend is on target to get much worse as Alzheimer's proliferates within the Latino community.

Compounding Alzheimer's risk factors due to poor health, Latinos are also faced with an increased risk of Alzheimer's due to advanced age. As noted previously, age is the single greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and Latinos are on track to have the greatest life expectancy of all minority groups in the United States.

The chances of developing Alzheimer's disease doubles approximately every five years after age 65, and after age 85 the risk reaches nearly 50 percent.^v Further, and of major significance, research has found that symptoms of Alzheimer's appear, almost seven years earlier in Latinos than in non-Latino whites.^{vi}

AGE OF ALZHEIMER'S SYMPTOM ONSET

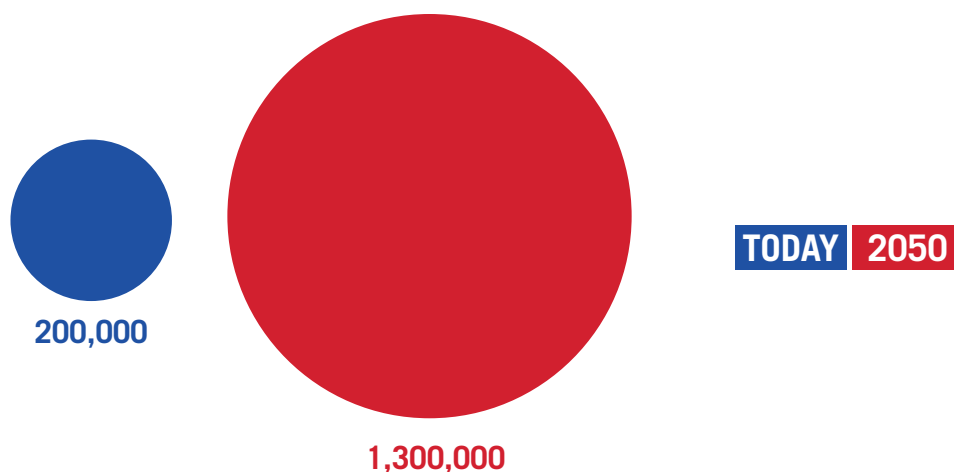
(University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine,
Christopher M. Clark, M.D. Study presented at ICAD)



PREVALENCE WITHIN THE LATINO COMMUNITY According to a study published in 2014 in the medical journal *Neurology*, Alzheimer's disease may contribute to as many deaths in the United States as heart disease or cancer. The study's authors found that Alzheimer's was the root cause of death in more than 500,000 deaths in 2010, a number that would place it as the **third-leading** cause of death in the United States.^{vii}

Estimates based on Census Bureau figures and a study of Alzheimer's prevalence finds the number of Latinos with Alzheimer's could grow from an estimated 200,000 today to 1.3 million by 2050, a growth of 600 percent.^{viii}

PROJECTED GROWTH OF ALZHEIMER'S IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY



While non-Hispanic whites make up the current majority of the more than five million people in the U.S. with Alzheimer’s and other dementias, research shows that Latinos are approximately 1.5 times more likely than whites to develop Alzheimer’s. Alzheimer’s is the eight leading cause of death for Latinos.^{ix}

BARRIERS TO TREATMENT AND UNDERSTANDING Several barriers prevent Latinos from accessing preventative care and diagnosis for Alzheimer’s and related dementias, including cultural biases in cognitive testing, inadequate translation of diagnostic tools, and a lack of bilingual professionals in the cognitive health field.^x

Further, Latino older adults are less likely to participate in the formal healthcare system due to cultural distrust of the system and a lack of healthcare coverage compared to non-Latino older adults. According to the Center on an Aging Society, one-fourth of Hispanics age 50 to 64 who have a chronic condition are uninsured and less than one-third are covered for the prescription drugs they need to manage those conditions.^{xi}

A 2013 study conducted by the National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA) found Latinos have several misconceptions when it comes to Alzheimer’s. According to the study, “older adults stated that some people get Alzheimer’s because they think too much, are stressed, or have personality issues.”^{xii}

CAREGIVING ISSUES & IMPACT Alzheimer’s increasingly affects Latino families on two fronts: the increased risk of getting the disease and the increased risk of caring for a family member with the disease. According to a 2008 study from Evercare and the National Alliance for Caregiving, one-third of Latino households report having at least one caregiver. There are an estimated 8.1 million Latino caregivers in the U.S. and approximately 74 percent are female.^{xiii}

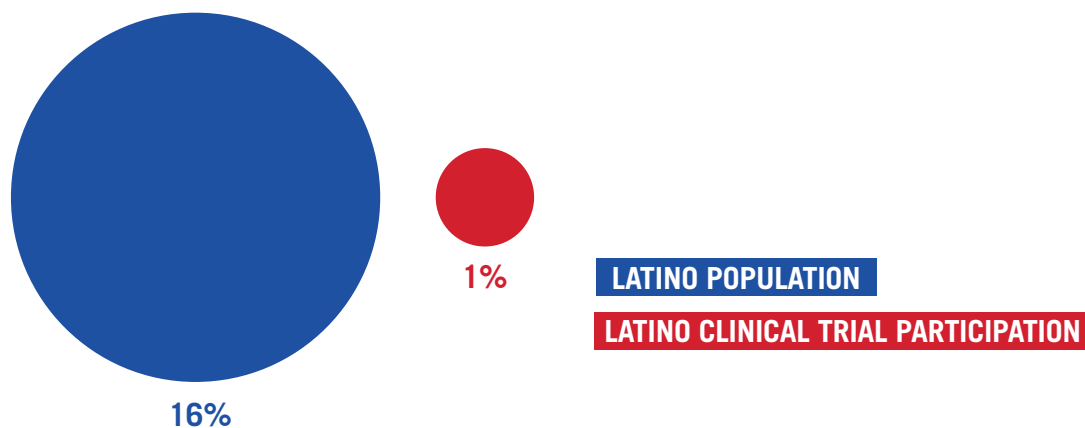
Of these caregivers, the study found that more than one-in-five (23 percent) are caring for individuals with Alzheimer’s, dementia, or a related mental condition.



Families, and particularly daughters, provide a disproportionate share of Alzheimer’s care. Latina caregivers provide Alzheimer’s care for longer periods of time and themselves experience higher levels of impairment than non-Latino caregivers.^{xiv}

CLINICAL TRIALS: THE SEARCH FOR A CURE NEEDS DIVERSITY Latino volunteers are needed to help researchers understand and develop treatments for Alzheimer’s and related dementias that work for all ethnic groups. While Latinos make up 16 percent of the U.S. population, they make up less than one percent of participants in National Institutes of Health clinical trials.^{xv} Research on possible genetic factors in Alzheimer’s and other dementias is important to helping researchers improve their understanding of the disease and its cause and may lead to improved prevention, treatment approaches, or even a cure and minority engagement in these studies is crucial.

LATINO PARTICIPATION IN NIH CLINICAL TRIALS



Despite the importance of clinical trial diversity, Latinos are overwhelmingly unengaged in the clinical trial process. According to a 2013 Research!America poll, when asked if they or someone in their family has ever participated in a clinical trial, only 17 percent of Latinos said yes. Furthermore, 52 percent of Latinos cited a lack of trust as a major reason they don’t participate in clinical trials.^{xvi} Despite low levels of engagement, the poll also found that 57 percent of Latinos said, “it’s very important to participate as a volunteer in a clinical trial to improve the health of others” and 75 percent said they would likely participate in a clinical trial if recommended by a doctor.

CONCLUSION There are several deep-rooted factors that position Alzheimer’s as a serious threat to the health of the Latino community, including widening health disparities and a lack of awareness of the disease and its symptoms. As the Latino population grows, particularly the 65 years and older segment, it becomes more necessary to develop culturally appropriate public education resources, tailored public policy solutions, and adequate private sector engagement to stem the impact of Alzheimer’s disease.

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ABOUT LATINOSAGAINSTALZHEIMER'S

LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's is the nation's first-ever coalition of national Latino organizations focused on raising awareness of Alzheimer's impact on the Latino community. LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's works to raise the profile of Alzheimer's disease as an urgent Latino health issue that demands the attention of industry leaders, community stakeholders and policymakers.

Convened by USAgainstAlzheimer's, coalition members include: The Hispanic Federation, The Latino Alzheimer's and Memory Disorders Alliance (LAMDA), The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and The National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA).

ABOUT USAGAINSTALZHEIMER'S

USAgainstAlzheimer's is an entrepreneurial and disruptive organization demanding a solution to Alzheimer's by 2020. Driven by the suffering of millions of families USAgainstAlzheimer's presses for greater urgency from government, industry and the scientific community in the quest for an Alzheimer's cure—accomplishing this through effective leadership, collaborative advocacy, and strategic investments.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LATINOSAGAINSTALZHEIMER'S:
USAgainstAlzheimers.org/networks/latinos**

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- ii CDC/NCHS Data Brief Number 116, 2013.
- iii Prevalence of Dementia in Older Latinos: The Influence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Stroke and Genetic Factors. JAGS 2003.
- iv How Far Have We Come In Reducing Health Disparities?, 2012
- v U.S. Administration of Aging and The National Alliance for Hispanic Health
- vi University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Christopher M. Clark, M.D. Study presented at ICAD
- vii Bryan, James. "Contribution of Alzheimer Disease to Mortality in the United States." Neurology (2014): N. pag. Web. 2 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.neurology.org/content/early/2014/03/05/WNL.0000000000000240>>
- viii These figures are derived by applying the estimate of prevalence of Alzheimer's disease over the age of 65 from D.A. Evans et al, "Estimated Prevalence of Alzheimer's Disease in the United States" The Milbank Quarterly 68:2 (1990) 267-289 to Census figures on total number of Hispanics in the United States age 65 and over in 2000 and projections for 2050. US Census 2000 PHC-T-8 Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin by Age and Sex for the United States 2000, Table 8. US Census Bureau. Projections of the Total Resident Population by 5 Year Age Groups, Race, Hispanic Origin with Special Age Categories Middle Series, 2050 to 2070 (NP-T-4-G), found at www.census.gov.
- ix Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010
- x Manly, J.J., Jacobs, D.M., & Mayeux, R. (1999). Alzheimer Disease among Different Ethnic and Racial Groups. In R.D. Terry et al (Eds.), Alzheimer's Disease (pp. 117-132). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- xi Center on an Aging Society, op cit
- xii Attitudes, Level of Stigma, and Level of Knowledge About Alzheimer's Disease Among Hispanic Elderly Adults and Caregivers, and Alzheimer's-Related Challenges for Caregivers; National Hispanic Council on Aging, 2013
- xiii Hispanic Family Caregiving in the U.S. 2008
- xiv Harwood et al. Predictors of Positive and Negative Appraisal among Cuban American Caregivers of Alzheimer's Disease Patients. International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry. 2000
- xv Data presented by J. Tierney in "Dialogues on Diversifying Clinical Trials," Washington, D.C., 2011 Sept 22. http://www.womenshealthresearch.org/site/PageServer?pagename=events_clinicaltrials.
- xvi Clinical Trials: Poll Data of Minority Populations. Research!America. 2013