

Hispanic population at greater risk for Lyme disease

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In their article, “Knowledge and prevention of tick-borne diseases among Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents of Maryland and Virginia,” [Hu and colleagues](#) examined U.S. Lyme disease (LD) surveillance data and found that “Hispanics were more likely to have disseminated LD compared with non-Hispanics.”

The authors summarized several potential concerns for the Hispanic population:

1. “lack of health insurance among much of the population leading to delayed care”
2. “language barriers when accessing health care”
3. “lack of awareness of early LD symptoms”

In addition, the study found Hispanic individuals had a different understanding of Lyme disease (in two areas) when compared to non-Hispanic people.

1. Hispanic respondents were less likely (21%) than non-Hispanics (53%) to report familiarity with Lyme disease symptoms.
2. Hispanic respondents were less likely (40%) than non-Hispanics (85%) to correctly identify ticks as vectors of Lyme disease.

Hispanic individuals also differed in some areas of personal protection.

1. Hispanic respondents were less likely (17%) than non-Hispanics (35%) to check for ticks daily.
2. However, Hispanic respondents were more likely (36%) than non-Hispanics (25%) to shower after coming indoors.

A language barrier played a role in impacting the Hispanic population's understanding of Lyme disease. According to Hu, “primary English speakers had approximately 2- to 10-fold greater odds of knowledge and preventive practices for LD as compared to primary Spanish speakers.”

The authors’ study demonstrates the dire need for linguistically appropriate education and outreach for the Hispanic population.

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[Are military family members at risk for Lyme disease?](#)

[Tick bite prevention methods vary between socio-economic levels](#)

References:

1. Hu SY, Starr JA, Gharpure R, Mehta SP, Feldman KA, Nelson CA. Knowledge and prevention of tickborne diseases among Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents of Maryland and Virginia. Zoonoses Public Health. 2019.

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