

Hispanic Culture Report

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N432 Culture Report

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"Hispanic" refers to people with origins or descent from Spanish-speaking countries, primarily in Latin America and Spain. Populated Hispanic countries include Mexico, Spain, Colombia, and Argentina, among many others. The United States is also home to a significant Hispanic population, primarily of Mexican origin. According to the United States Census Bureau of September 2021, approximately 17.5% of the Illinois population identified as Hispanic or Latino. As with many cultures, Hispanic religious beliefs can vary depending on individual, historical, or cultural factors. In the United States, the most common religious practice of Hispanic ethnicity is Catholicism. This includes devotion to the Virgin Mary (also known as Our Lady of Guadalupe), which is essential to the religious life of Hispanic Catholics. Our Lady of Guadalupe symbolizes life, hope, health, death, and salvation. Hispanic Catholics have a deep devotion to saints, with colorful celebrations and feasts to honor. Festivals are significant for Hispanic Catholics, especially on Easter and Christmas, celebrated with family, music, dance, and tradition. Spiritual traditions are incorporated into their faith, such as miracles, candles, amulets, and healing rituals. The sacramental life of the church is crucial to Hispanic Catholics, including baptism, confirmation, Mass, reconciliation, marriage, and caring for the sick. Again, religious practices and devotion can vary on the individual and beliefs. Still, those who practice reflect the fusion of the Catholic doctrine and teachings with cultural traditions and diverse and vibrant expression of the Catholic faith within Hispanic families and communities (Samaha, 2023).

Hispanic religion is vital in shaping attitudes toward health, illness, and treatment. Spirituality can intertwine with healthcare, as many Hispanics place great importance on faith, prayer, and religious rituals as sources of comfort and healing. Healthcare providers must be sensitive to these beliefs, incorporating cultural competence and respect for religious practices, as it can significantly impact patient outcomes and the overall quality of healthcare delivery within Hispanic communities (Gast et al., 2020). Spirituality plays a significant role in how Hispanic Catholics view pain and suffering. Some

Hispanic individuals may see their suffering as their purpose to serve a higher power or penance.

Solidarity and togetherness is strong within Hispanic communities, especially when caring for those in pain/hospitals. Healing rituals by families and self may be performed within the hospital, so it is essential that the healthcare team provides culturally competent care for religious practicing patients (Gast et al., 2020).

There are many practices related to the Labor & Delivery of Hispanic individuals. Family and religious members may pray and offer blessings to the mother to seek protection for the mother and baby. Being a mother is seen as a sacred duty and blessing within this community, and spiritual guidance may be needed during this time. Ceremonies and religious practices may be performed during and after childbirth. Religious symbols may also be used, such as rosaries, icons, and artifacts. These symbols provide comfort and strength to the mother and family during pain and uncertainty, as well as a connection to faith (Ricci et al., 2020). The naming of a child may be inspired by religion to honor saints or special religious meanings. During the Postpartum period, the family may request to practice religious customs for the recovery of the mother and baby. Healthcare providers must be respectful and mindful of religious practices as long as they do not put the mother and baby in bad health.

The standard family structure in this culture is close-knit and is a "family unit", including extended family. The father is seen as the head of the family, and the mother is responsible for the home life. Individuals within this family will have a moral responsibility to care for others and provide support. Children are taught to practice the importance of good manners, honor, and respect to the elderly. The elders provide wisdom and guidance, childcare and support, spiritual and ritual guidance, cultural heritage, health and herbal knowledge, celebrations, etc. Depending on the family, the elderly may live in the home until death. The elderly provides a sense of identity, unity, and cultural heritage within the Hispanic culture (Samaha, 2020). Spanish is the dominant language in Hispanic households, while English is typically taught at school. While in the hospital, those who are not English-speaking in

the United States will have an interpreter ordered so the healthcare team can effectively communicate to the patient and their needs. It is also common for Hispanic patients in the hospital not to give direct eye contact to the nurse to demonstrate respect (Ricci et al., 2020).

Hispanic cuisine has been passed down through generations and serves a vital role in Hispanic culture. Food is used to celebrate big milestones, religious events, and celebrations, and to remember those who have passed away through generational dishes and recipes. During the postpartum period, Latin Americans have been known to practice a postpartum tradition known as *la cuarentena*, which means “quarantine” in English. During this practice, the mother is to rest, recover, and breastfeed while the women in her family housekeep and support her needs. Other beliefs during this period include abstaining from sex, cold showers, and using an abdominal binder called a *Faja* (Gonzalez, 2022). Culturally specific diets may not be available at a hospital, and the family may bring in food for the mother to adhere to religious practices. If the hospital was to provide a culturally specific diet, then hospitals may be more comforting and understanding of the patients they serve.

References

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