

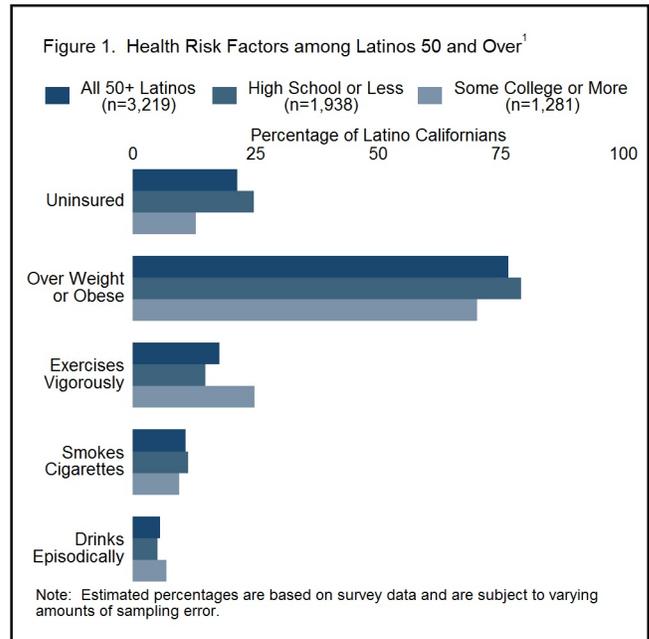
California Latino Americans and Aging

Approximately 750,000 Latino and Latina Americans (hereafter, Latinos) in California are of retirement age (65 and over). Another 1.6 million are of pre-retirement age (between 50 and 64). These groups represent 24 percent of California's 50-64 population, 18 percent of its 65 and over population, and, when combined, 6 percent of its total population. This Short Subject presents information from the most recent California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)¹ about the health risk factors, economic security, and health-related caregiving of older California Latinos and considers differences across levels of educational attainment.

HEALTH RISK FACTORS

Figure 1 presents information about some health-related risk factors, ranging from insurance coverage to exercise, that may impact healthy aging. More than 20 percent of California's Latinos over the age of 50 are uninsured. As a group, older Latinos are more than three times as likely to be uninsured as are other older Californians. Because most California residents are eligible for Medicare when they turn 65, the majority of the uninsured are between the ages of 50 and 64. Coverage rates vary with educational attainment as 25 percent of these Latinos with a high school degree or less are uninsured compared to only 13 percent of those with some college or more.

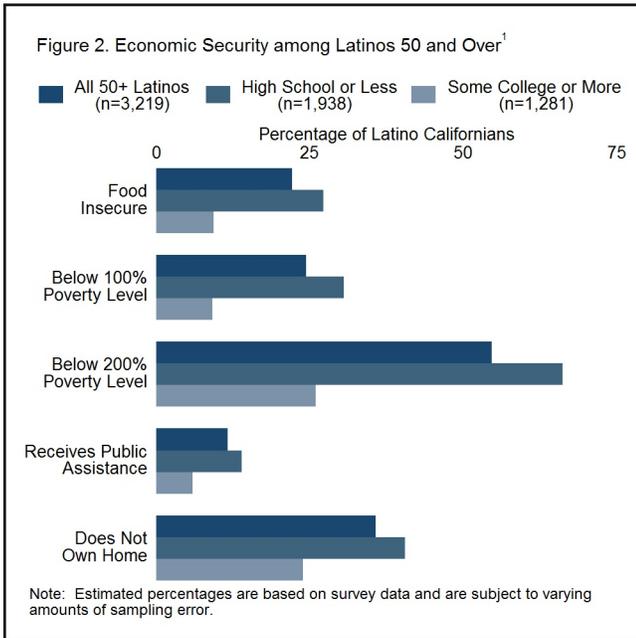
Estimates also suggest that more than 75 percent of California Latinos 50 years old and over are overweight or obese and that fewer than 20 percent report exercising vigorously. Here, too, there are notable differences with regard to education. Those who did not go to college are more likely to be overweight and less likely to exercise. Smoking and drinking (consumption of at least four alcoholic drinks for women and five for men in a day at least once per month) are far less prevalent than obesity and the differences between those with and without college are small.



ECONOMIC SECURITY

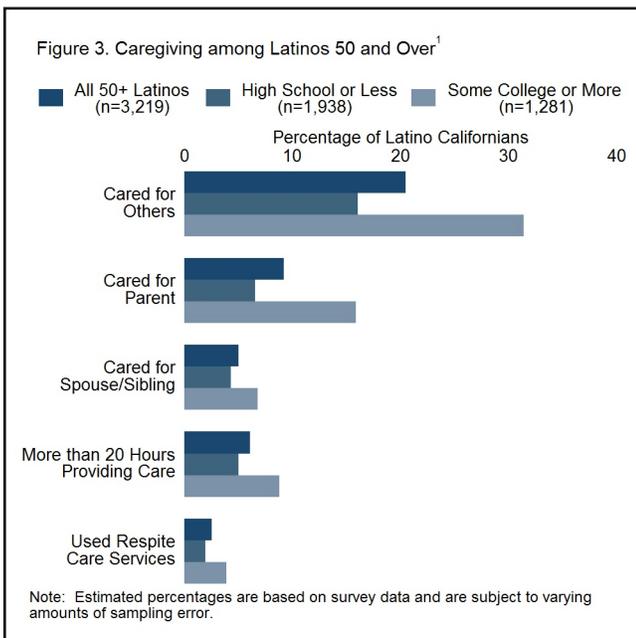
Figure 2 provides data about the economic security of California Latinos over the age of 50. Based on estimates from the CHIS data, roughly 20 percent of this group are food insecure (e.g., cannot afford to purchase sufficient food and eat balanced meals) and/or are in poverty. These estimates suggest that older Latinos are about 3.5 times as likely as other older Californians to suffer from food security and poverty-related issues. Additionally, more than 50 percent live below 200 percent of the poverty level, a threshold that is roughly comparable to the California Elder Economic Security Standard Index average. About 12 percent receive governmental assistance through TANF, CalWORKs, SSI, and/or food stamps.

Economic security is also related to educational attainment. Older California Latinos who did not go to college are less likely to own their homes and more than twice as likely to have food insecurity and lower incomes than are those who did.



INFORMAL CAREGIVING

Informal caregiving is an important dimension of healthy aging as many individuals ages 50 and over provide or receive care for long-term illnesses or disabilities. Among the Latino CHIS participants ages 50 and over, 20 percent provide care to friends or family members at some time during the year (Figure 3). As a group, they are about 23 percent less likely to report providing care than are other older Californians from different race/ethnic categories. Around 6 percent report spending more than 20 hours a week providing care, while fewer than 3 percent use respite care services.



Latinos ages 50 and over with at least some college appear more likely to provide care than are those with a high school degree or less. They are also more likely to spend more than 20 hours a week providing care and to use respite care services. The reasons for this are not immediately clear as caregiving is prevalent among lower-middle-income households. It may be that those without a college education are less likely to have living spouses or parents to whom they can administer care.

From the CHIS data we can infer that at least 200,000 California Latinos over the age of 50 receive informal care because 9 percent of respondents indicated that they provide care to a parent. Notably, this inference assumes that parents receiving care are also Latino.

Similarly, the most recent American Community Survey estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that more than 250,000 California Latinos over the age of 50 have disabilities that limit their ability to live independently.² It is likely that many of these people receive some support from friends and family.

FURTHER READING

Susan C. Reinhard, Carol Levine, and Sarah Samis, *Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care*, AARP and United Hospital Fund, 2012.

REFERENCES

- California Health Interview Survey. CHIS 2009 Adult Public Use File, (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, November 2012).
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2011 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

This Short Subject was requested by Assembly Member Mariko Yamada, Chair of the Committee on Aging and Long-term Care.

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