

Blacks, Hispanics Hit Harder by Coronavirus, Early US Data Show

The coronavirus has now infected more than 1.2 million people across the country, and African Americans, Hispanics and other minority populations are disproportionately being affected by the virus and the illness it causes: COVID-19.

A mid-April analysis from Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) showed that in the majority of states reporting data that include race and ethnicity, black Americans account for a higher share of confirmed cases and deaths compared to their share of the total population. An earlier report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) studied a handful of states and found that among patients for whom information on race and ethnicity was available, black Americans were hospitalized at higher rates than whites for COVID-19. What's more, in New York City, the U.S. community hardest hit by the virus, more Hispanics per capita are succumbing to the illness than any other ethnic group.

Infection rates have been especially high in the Navajo Nation, which has land in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, with more than 2,700 cases and 88 deaths as of May 8. The KFF analysis shows that Native Americans make up more than a third of cases in New Mexico but only 9 percent of the state's population. In Arizona, Native Americans account for 7 percent of cases and 21 percent of deaths, but 4 percent of the state's population. Utah did not release racial data on its cases.

"The data is clear and has been clear for decades: African Americans, Latinos and other minority groups live sicker and die younger," says Stephen Thomas, a professor of health policy and management and director of the Maryland Center for Health Equity at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. "We cannot close our eyes or put up blinders to the disproportionate impact of this disease on racial and ethnic minority communities."

Better communication about the virus in minority communities is needed "so that everyone understands what it's going to take for us all to protect one another," White House coronavirus task force response coordinator Deborah Birx, M.D., said at a recent news briefing.

There are also social and economic elements at play, according to experts. More than 1 in 3 (35 percent) adults under age 65 with household incomes below \$15,000 are at higher risk of serious illness if infected with the coronavirus, compared to about 1 in 7 (16 percent) of adults with household incomes greater than \$50,000, a report from the KFF shows.

Without a vaccine or approved drug therapies, health officials say one of the best ways to decrease the risk of infection from the coronavirus is to keep a physical distance from other people and to stay home as much as possible. But for many in minority communities, that is not an option.

"If you work and you cannot work from home, then you have to make a very difficult decision" about how you are going to put food on the table and pay rent, Rodríguez-Díaz says. "And, therefore, you probably decide to risk your health and expose yourself or your family by actually working."

Source: <https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2020/minority-communities-covid-19.html>



June 2020 Calendar

National LGBTQIA Pride Month
National Safety Month

- 5-7 – Eid al Fitr (Islam)
- 7 – Pentecost (Orthodox Christian)
- 7 – Cancer Survivors' Day (US)
- 11 – Corpus Christi (Catholic Christian)
- 11-18 – Nursing Assistants' Week (US)
- 12 – World Day Against Child Labor
- 13 – Multicultural American Child Day (US)
- 14 – Flag Day (US)
- 15 – World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- 14-20 – Animal Rights Awareness Week (US)
- 16 – Guru Arjan Martyrdom (Sikh)
- 21 – Solstice/Litha – Yule (Wicca/Pagan)
- 26 – Same Sex Marriage Day (US)
- 27 – National HIV Testing Day (US)

Plain Language In Medicine

By Romina Marazzato Sparano

Source: <http://ata-md.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Caduceus-2020-1.pdf>

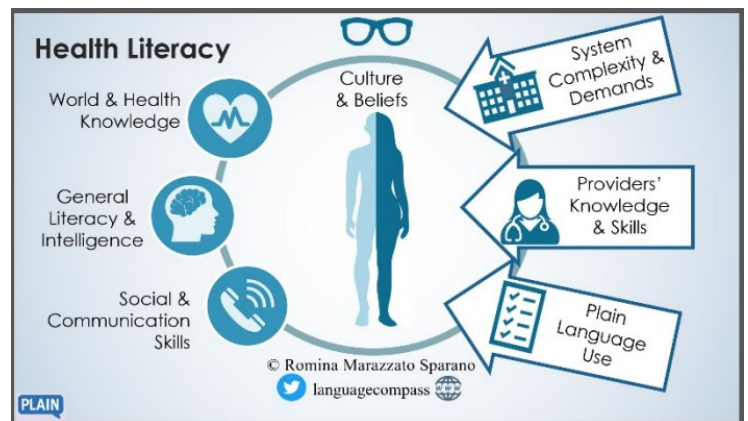
Plain language is the use of words, grammar, structures, and design that allow successful communication. The Plain Language Association International and the International Plain Language Federation define it as communication whose wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information. Plain Language has a vital role to play in sharing medical information with and among patients, caregivers, and providers. In the age of big data (computationally extracting information from big data sets), genomics (the study of how a person's genes interact with their environment—including drugs) and personalized medicine (tailoring medical treatment to individual patient characteristics), clear and accessible communication is more important than ever.

Plain Language and Health Literacy

In medical communication, the term health literacy refers to the ability of a person to find, understand, and process information to make healthcare decisions. This definition is currently under review. The concern is that success in health communication does not only hinge upon an individual's ability, but also on the accessibility, clarity, ethics, and actionability of health information and services offered. A wider understanding of health literacy sees it as a multidimensional construct that includes the set of world and health knowledge, general intelligence and literacy, and social and communication skills that allow an individual to seek, obtain, understand, assess, and apply health information in daily life and health care contexts.

This ability is mediated by the individual's culture and beliefs, including education and language; the knowledge, intelligence, literacy, communication skills, culture, and beliefs of health care and health information providers; the demands and complexities of the healthcare system; the use of plain language in communication.

The responsibility to increase health literacy through clear communication is now being promoted and even required through laws and regulations that "see" the benefits of plain language. One such regulation is the European Union Clinical Trials Regulation (EU CTR 536/2014) with the requirement for the submission of lay summaries to promote trust, partnership, and patient engagement. (www.bit.ly/37iRQK1) Another example: US hospitals now face financial penalties for high readmission rates, so they are turning to plain language in an effort to reduce rehospitalization due to poor communication.



New Staff Profile: Mohammad Zahiree

Mohammad is the newest multilingual professional to join UCDH Medical Interpreting team. He started in the department as the COVID-19 pandemic was unfolding, and had a steep learning curve with MyChart and Zoom video visits, telephone and Cisco Jabber service to patients and providers. Mohammad was born and raised in Afghanistan. He learned English in Pakistan as a child, when he immigrated there in 1988. He graduated from Medical School in 2007 and was accepted into Pediatric Surgery at the Indira Gandhi Child Institute in Kabul, Afghanistan. In 2008 he also joined the US Army as a Faculty Teaching Assistant/Medical Interpreter with Combat Physician Assistant school to train the Afghan National Army Academy students. Working with US Army put his life in danger, and he was granted a Special Immigrant Visa to come to the US.

He came to the US in the fall of 2014, and at first he was lost – he had no idea what to do in the new country. After getting used to the US culture and traditions a bit, he worked at Quest Diagnostic labs, then studied at American River College and completed his AA degree in General Sciences. Mohammad's goal is to be accepted into the UC Davis Physician Assistant Program. "I am happy to work at such a great medical center. UCDH is the first employer in the US that asked me to tell my life story – this institution cares about its employees" – said Mohammad. He speaks and writes Dari, Pashto, and Farsi, but he can also read in Arabic and Urdu. Mohammad has two daughters and a son. Likes to spend time with his family and play soccer on weekends. He also likes to cook different delicious Afghani dishes.

Welcome onboard, Mohammad! We are happy to have you join our diverse team!