

ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED HEALTH NEEDS OF A SELECTED LATINO POPULATION OF LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS IN FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

The U.S. Latino population faces immense health problems associated with low socioeconomic status. This study surveyed 42 Latino parents of children attending Birney Elementary School in California's San Joaquin Valley to assess their perceptions of the health needs in their community. They were asked about their experience with and perceptions of the status of their community's health in three areas: mental health, chronic disease, and health behaviors.

The health issue of greatest concern was asthma. A higher incidence of asthma was reported among the sample than in the larger county population. The issues of next greatest concern were illegal drug use, nutrition and overweight, diabetes, and physical activity. The majority of participants were knowledgeable about all the health issues examined, but a large percentage was unaware of local resources offering assistance on the health concerns. Participants were very interested in learning more about these health issues.

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