

Working Conditions that Exacerbate the Risk of Hypertension in Latinos Working in Meat Packing Plants

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BACKGROUND

- Psychosocial stressors have been identified as exacerbating Latinos' risk for hypertension.
- Hypertension is a common risk factor in the development of cardiovascular disease-the second leading cause of death among Latinos.
- Although meat packing plants are regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, workers are still facing many dangerous working conditions including exposure to high noise levels, slippery floors, dangerous equipment, and physical injury such as lacerations.

METHODS

❖ Participants:

- A total of 25 individuals living in a Midwestern Micropolitan community participated in five gender specific focus groups (3 female and 2 male)

❖ Recruitment:

- A research assistant, who is originally from the community, used her social network to recruit participant through phone calls and in-person recruitment.

❖ Procedure:

- Focus group guide asked:
 - Individual's knowledge about hypertension
 - Hypertension's impact in the community
- Focus group discussions were analyzed using an open coding approach to identify salient themes related to factors contributing to poor hypertension control.

❖ Sample Characteristics:

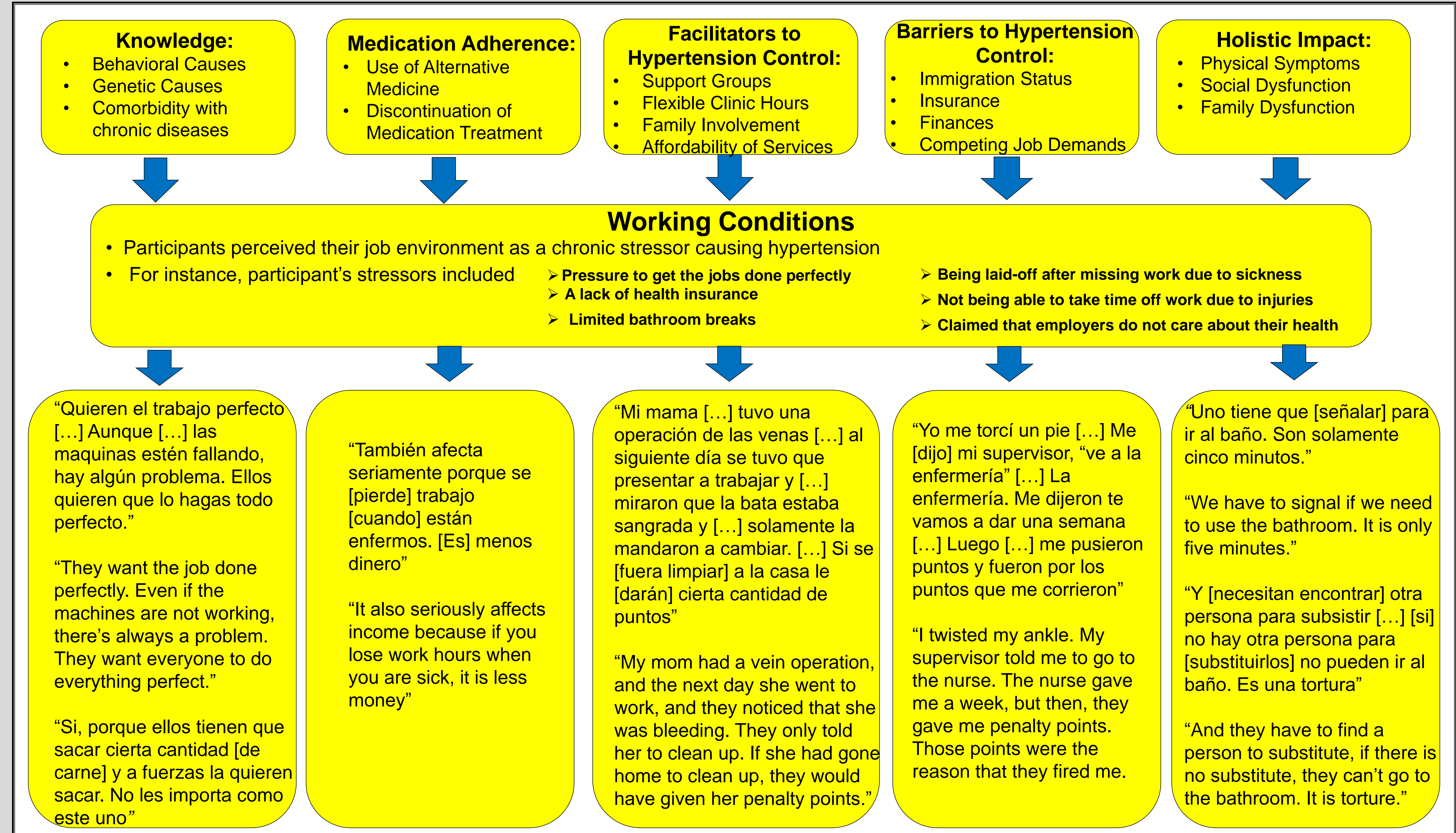
Age range: 18-57 y.o. (38.63 +/-12.61)
2-35 years (18.35 +/-10.46)

Level of education: x> High School n=13
<x High School n=8

Birth place: Mexico n=18, United States n=3, Brazil n=1, Guatemala n=1, Puerto Rico n=1

Languages Spoken: Spanish n=15, English n= 1, Spanish and English n=8, Other n=0

RESULTS



IMPLICATIONS

- Workers in the meat packing plant stated that the workplace is a chronic psychosocial stressor that has implications for hypertension.
- Not only are Latinos stressed while working, but they also bring those stresses to their homes leading to continuous high levels of stress.
- The human body reacts to these high levels of stress by going into the fight or flight mode leading to high blood pressure as well as suppressing the immune system.
- Acknowledging that the workplace is a stressful environment and supporting stress-reducing health programs, it may help to cope/reduce stress, work injuries, and control chronic diseases.
- Systematic Thinking:**
 - By viewing the work place as part of various systems, it can help to understand how health is influenced.
 - By having researchers partnering with the workplace to improve working conditions, it can help in reducing the chronic stress in workers' lives.
- Social Justice:**
 - To improve the social determinants of health, public health activist can promote health equity which includes a wage minimum, work safety, and other working conditions in meat packing plants.
 - The psychosocial stressors that were found in the study are need to be addressed due to the life expectancy disparity between Latinos in meat packing plants.