

Overview

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) has increased in all races in recent years, with Hispanic Americans seeing a rise in diagnosed cases comparable to white Americans. Unfortunately, Hispanic Americans are still having delays in diagnosis. According to a journal article published in [July 2022, Inflammatory Bowel Diseases](#), Hispanic patients with IBD go longer without a diagnosis and are often misdiagnosed. The most common reasons for this are access to care, environmental factors, and genetic variations. Hispanics do have higher rates of perianal disease, including fistulas, more than other groups of patients. But otherwise, very little is known about how IBD presents in Hispanics because clinical trials have not historically focused on Hispanics.



Hispanic American Individuals with IBD and ostomies experience disparities and barriers to IBD and ostomy care.

Disparities

In IBD and ostomy care, there are known disparities that have a negative impact on the health of Hispanic Americans. These disparities mean that compared to their white counterparts, individuals with IBD who are of Hispanic descent in the United States have worse health outcomes. For example, one study from *The American Journal of Surgery* found that Hispanic Americans with IBD who had surgery were at higher odds of readmission than white, Asian, or Black Americans. The same study also found that Hispanic individuals had longer hospital stays postoperatively than white Americans. Furthermore, the authors note that, in general, studies do not include outcomes for Hispanic individuals who have IBD (Montgomery et al., 2018.)

These disparities can be attributed to a variety of factors including systemic issues and racism. For example, Hispanic individuals in the United States are less likely to have health insurance than white individuals, as a result, there may be a delay in seeking care due to economic concerns.

Disparities Cont.

Systemic racism may also play a role, as healthcare providers have been trained to consider an IBD diagnosis in a white person of Jewish descent, but may not consider an IBD diagnosis for the same GI symptoms in Hispanic/Latino patients.

While these known disparities exist, there is an increasing effort to raise awareness and resources are being developed with the Hispanic community in mind. In this tailored fact sheet, we will be providing resources that Hispanic and Latino patients may find valuable as they navigate IBD.

Hispanic/Latino Diet & IBD

Even though the exact cause of IBD is not fully understood, current research suggests it can be the result of an abnormal immune response triggered by factors such as genetics and environmental exposures, including smoking, infections, diet, antibiotics, hygiene, pollution, and even climate. Although diet alone does not cause IBD, diet and nutrition can play an important role in IBD to aid in reducing inflammation, malnutrition, surgery support, reducing colorectal cancer risk, and even helping medications work.

Our cultural background, which includes our upbringing, our ethnicity, and even our religion, may all play a role in our relationship with food. Because research suggests that a high number of patients have less satisfaction eating since their IBD diagnosis, a way to increase that satisfaction rate is to keep cultural influences in your diet and swap out ingredients, if needed, to maximize tolerance and satisfaction in eating.

At Digestive Disease Week 2023 held in Chicago, IL, a specific session was held with regards to Hispanic/Latino Diet in IBD, as presented by Dr. Oriana Damas. The presentation was “Hispanic Diet High In Vegetables Is Associated With Lower Clinical And Biochemical Disease Activity In Individuals With IBD: A Longitudinal Study Of Disease Activity And Microbiome Signatures”. With IBD on the rise in Hispanics, there is little is known about the various factors that may influence disease.



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Hispanic/Latino Diet & IBD Cont.

Since there has been research that diet may influence IBD inflammation, including by modifying the intestinal microbiome, this study was of high value given how important diet is in the Hispanic/Latino population. This 1 year longitudinal study examined diet patterns which could be associated with disease activity among Hispanics, as well as their relationship to inflammation and gut microbiome.



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Four different diet clusters were identified throughout the study and it was found that dietary cluster 4 showed the lowest clinical activity, and it differed from the other clusters in that it had the highest consumption of traditional Hispanic starchy vegetables, such as yucca, taro and cocoyam. In addition, cluster 4 also consumed a greater intake of soups, which also consisted of starchy vegetables. On longitudinal analyses, the IBD patients whose clinical activity decreased over time had a higher intake of fruits and vegetables, with a much lower intake of grains, monounsaturated fatty acids and refined carbohydrates.

In summary, this study's findings demonstrated that a diet rich in Hispanic starchy vegetables was associated with lower clinical activity in Hispanics with IBD (particularly UC patients). Additionally, findings reflected that inflammation changes in Hispanic patients paralleled changes in their microbiome composition. What was most impressive was that this study is the first step towards developing a culturally relevant anti-inflammatory diet for Hispanic IBD patients. The study demonstrated food items that were influential in cluster determination including: tropical fruits, starchy vegetables, vegetable soups and even some mixed rice dishes.



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Community

Hispanic/Latino IBD patients in the U.S., and around the world, can find community to support them in their IBD journey so as not to live in isolation, in secrecy, and in shame. In the last few years of living through a global pandemic, the power of community has been more crucial than ever. There are now more resources available for the Hispanic/Latino IBD community to connect with fellow patients, to seek advice and to feel less alone. Below are a few highlights of Spanish language resources for Hispanic/Latino IBD patients to find their community:

- [Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Spanish website](#): Provides a thorough overview and detailed information including treatment options, surgery, diet, mental health, etc.
- [Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Facebook Hispanic Community Group](#): Launched in 2022 on Facebook, specifically for Hispanic/Latino IBD patients and caregivers to seek support, ask questions and find community online
- [Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Grupo de Apoyo para Adultos con EII](#): Launched in 2023 on Zoom, to provide an exclusively Spanish language support group for those seeking community in their native language

Glossary

Crohn's Disease: Chronic inflammatory disease of the entire gastrointestinal tract

Ulcerative Colitis: Chronic inflammatory disease of the large intestine, also called the colon, that affects the lining of the colon and causes small sores, or ulcers, to form

Virtual Brochures in Spanish

- [Living With Crohn's Disease \(SPANISH\)](#)
- [Living With Ulcerative Colitis \(SPANISH\)](#)
- [IBD Medications \(SPANISH\)](#)
- [Diet & Nutrition in IBD \(SPANISH\)](#)



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Resources

The UOAA offers translated resources for individuals who speak Spanish on their Spanish language site. These resources include basic information about types of ostomies (ileostomy, colostomy, urostomy), communication cards, diet information, and information about relationships/sexual health.

The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) offers patient education resources in Spanish on their site, including a fact sheet on IBD.

Organizations, like the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation have worked to include the Hispanic IBD experience in their work. For example, doing Facebook Lives that are recorded and linked on their YouTube channel as well as Instagram Live with Hispanic/Latino patients.



References and Citations

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