



Actor Network Theory, Irrational Health Beliefs, & Health Myths: Dead-Wrong Assumptions in the Diabetes Network

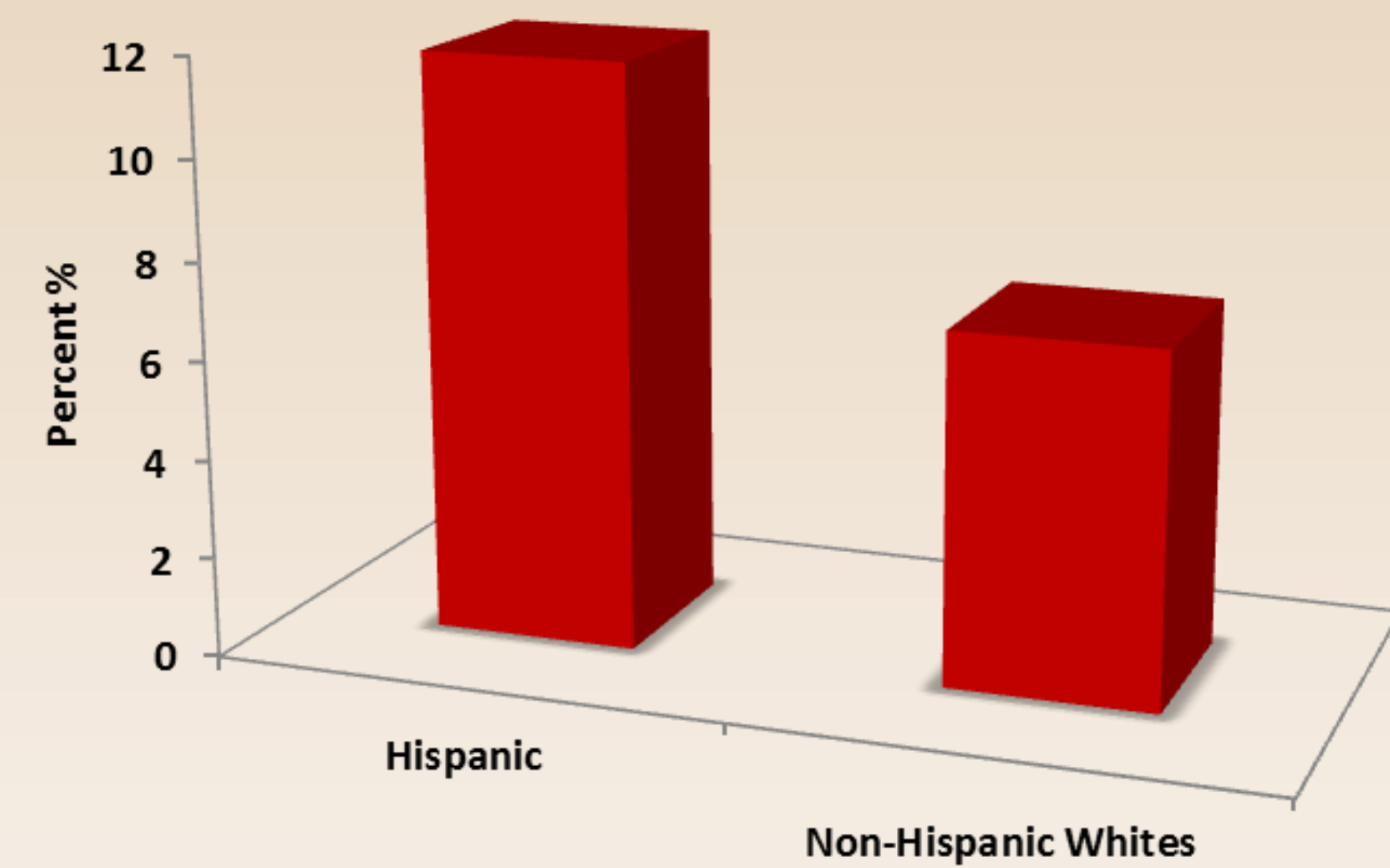
Background

IHBs

- Irrational health beliefs (IHBs) refer to the illogical opinions, attitudes and thoughts about health that lack empirical support and pragmatism.¹
- IHBs and health myths may impede an individual's ability to seek health information, seek medical care, adhere to medical treatments or even make reasonable health-care decisions.²

Diabetes

- Diabetes is a chronic condition characterized by the body's inability to properly control blood sugar levels.
- Minorities are more prone to developing diabetes.
- Hispanics have the highest prevalence of diabetes.³



Theory

- Activity Theory** is generally concerned with culturally mediated and socially situated activities. Looks at the big picture and explains why.
- Actor Network Theory** is concerned with the interaction between actors and the networks and helps explain the moment-by-moment translations and mechanisms of persuasion. It helps answer how.

Research Questions

This research project was specifically designed to explore the health belief "diabetes is curable."

RQ1: How is information about the curability of diabetes spread?

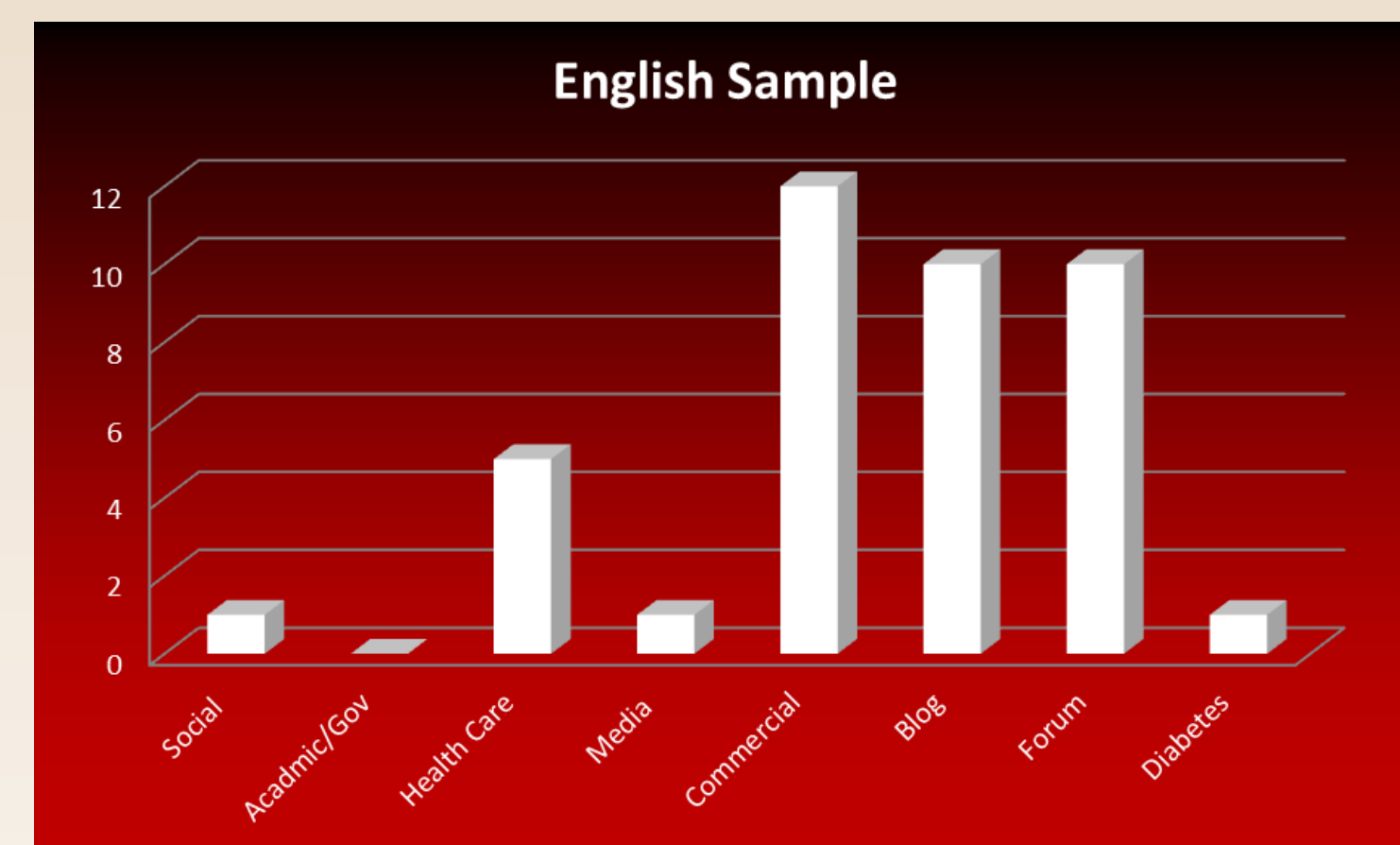
RQ2: What are the main intermediaries and mediators in the process?

Methods

- Identified and categorized existing networks: family, social, health care, media outlets, commercial, as well as, online blogs, forums and diabetes related webpages.
- Identified and categorized the main actors and switchers disseminating information about IHBs: persons, businesses, organizations, or anonymous contributors.
- Conducted a Google search using the term *diabetes is curable*. Used the URLs from the search results to determine the source of the information (social webpage, health webpage, media webpage, etc.). Each URL was individually accessed, and pertinent information was extracted from each page.

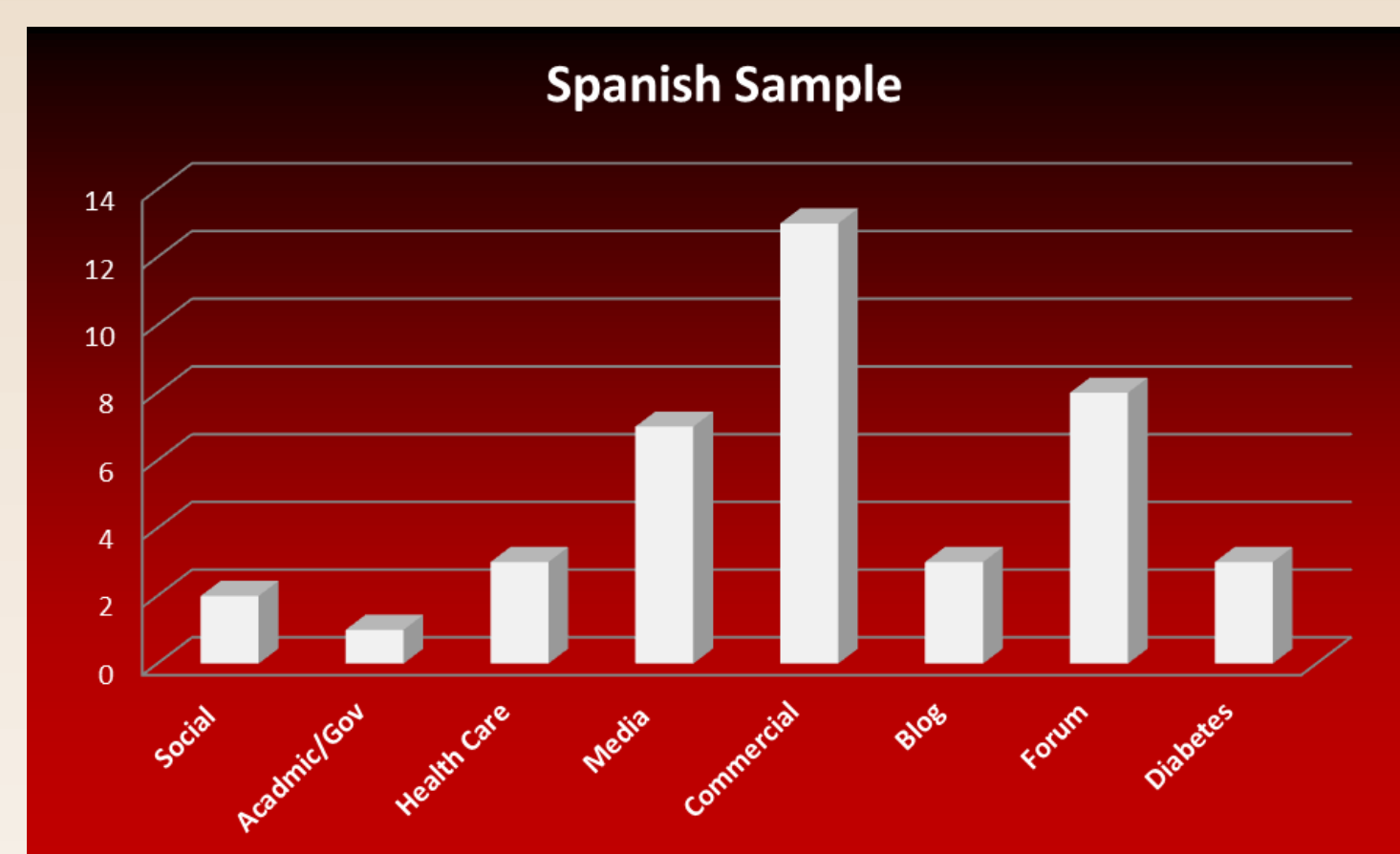
English Sample

Diabetes is curable
Results: 59,800
Relevant Non-repeated: 391
Randomly Selected: 40



Spanish Sample

La diabetes se cura.
Results: 70,500
Relevant Non-repeated: 259
Randomly Selected: 40



Data Collection and Analysis

Grounded Theory & Content Analysis

Line by Line

Identified Key Words



Made Connections

Conceptualized

Categorized

Findings

Blog Network

Claim introduced by a single blogger
Supported or rejected by participants

Dec 7, 2007 1:38 pm
4181 Views

Do you think there is no cure to diabetes? Think again.

New discoveries in alternative (herbal) medicine point out the 100% efficacy of the Philippine variety of Jambol (Scientific name: Syzygium Cumini) to permanently reverse the symptoms of Diabetes Mellitus, to both type "A" and type "B" diabetics.

I got cured myself in 1994, since then I no longer suffer diabetes.

I welcome Issues, Questions, and Comments.

PS: No doctor will prescribe a herbal remedy except those with specialty in topical medicine.

6 Comments

Forum Network

Claim is introduced by participants
Supported or rejected by other participants

4 years ago

0% 0 Votes

The general view is that diabetes is not permanently curable. But it can be permanently controlled with treatment or life style changes or both methods. The patient with type 1 diabetes should continue to take insulin through out life. In the case of type 2 diabetes after full control of the disease, the patient may stop drugs, if lifestyle changes that reduce the risk factors are practiced throughout his/her life.

Please see the 1st web site for promising new research for cure of type 1 diabetes by pancreatic islet cell transplantation. Please see the 2nd web site for what is possible at the moment

Source(s):
1. <http://diabetes.com/Permanent-Cure-for->
2. <http://diabetes.com/Permanent-Cure-for->

4 years ago

20% 1 Vote

Healthcare Network

Claim is usually dismissed by this network
Provides scientifically sound information and educates

Thousands of JustAnswer Experts are ready to answer your specific questions 24/7.

Customer Question

IS IT TRUE THAT DIABETES IS CURABLE BY PROPER DIET, WEIGHT REDUCTION AND EXERCISE WHEN DISCOVERED EARLY?

Submitted: 389 days and 19 hours ago
Category: Medical Status: CLOSED

Optional Information

Gender: male
Age: 36

Accepted Answer

Hi,
The most widely true that type 2 diabetes is curable with the methods that you have mentioned. Type 2 diabetes is caused by too things, one is increased insulin resistance in the peripheral tissues which can be reduced by weight reduction and diet control and although exercise. This will definitely delay the initiation of treatment and may be enough to avoid medication in certain cases however in the other type to which although insulin resistance there is mild insulin deficiency as well, the patient will require medication although these modalities and over time may even have to be started on insulin.

Hope this answers your question.

Dr. Michael J. Ansari
Ph.D., M.D., F.A.C.P., F.A.C.C.
Answered: 11/11/2009

Media Outlet Network

Disseminated information about diabetes in the form of news content, advertisements, and even radio programming

Univision Salud
Noticias Salud A-Z Salud de las Estrellas Medicina natural Medicamentos Farmacia

Entremedios y Condiciones | Diabetes

Más vínculo entre sodas y diabetes

Publicado 25/04/13 15:00 - Por: HealthDay

Unos investigadores europeos hallaron que las probabilidades aumentaron en hasta un 22 por ciento a ese nivel de consumo.

JUEVES, 25 de abril (HealthDay News) - Beber apenas un refresco endulzado con azúcar de 12 onzas (35.5 centímetros) al día puede aumentar el riesgo de desarrollar diabetes tipo 2 hasta un 22 por ciento, plantea un estudio europeo.

Academic/Government

Disseminated information through academic reports.
No opportunity for response or comments

Diabetes Life Lines

June/July 2013

In This Issue

- Diabetes - The Medical Perspective
- Medication Update
- Recipes To Try
- Menu Suggestions

Discussion

RQ1: How is information about the curability of diabetes spread?

Actor Network Theory/HOW:

- Problemization:** Individuals find diabetes a major problem and search for information and assistance.
- Interessement:** The individual's desire to hear that there is a cure may cause a person to disassociate from other agents and their beliefs — may ignore the rational options.

RQ2: What/Who are the main intermediaries and mediators in the process?

Intermediaries: Individuals with low health literacy, no power, cannot influence the claim, cannot be ignored.

Mediators: Bloggers, businesses, organizations, participants who reject the claim, anyone who has the power to spread or stop the spread of the IHB.

Activity Theory/WHY:

- Subjects:** Low-health literacy, little ability to understand the outcomes, individuals who are not thinking about how their actions affect others.
- Labor Division:** Individuals of low SES, generally less educated and more vulnerable to claims, lack scientific understanding, the educated take advantage.
- Rules:** Generally individuals are not going to make claims that will hurt others. Rule is not followed online.
- Community:** Social context is different for the Hispanic community. Hispanic participants are more willing to try alternative medicines. They want to believe in the claim.
- Mediation:** Online information is mediated through the existing networks. These networks may become significant for individuals who need family or peer support for gathering and applying information

Conclusion

Interventions

- Political/Legal:** Develop global and national policies that address the problem and are targeted to the business/organization and healthcare networks.
- Medical:** Health care professionals must develop cultural competence to better disseminate information to their patients.
- Socio-Cultural:** People with diabetes rely on social networks for disease management.

References

- Fulton J, Marcus DK, Merkey T. Irrational health beliefs and health anxiety. *J Clin Psychol.* 2011;67(6): 527-538
- Department of Health and Human Services. PAR-10-133 Understanding and Promoting Health Literacy. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-10-133.html>. Published May 5, 2010. Accessed May 19, 2011
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National diabetes fact sheet: national estimates and general information on diabetes and prediabetes in the United States, 2011. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011.