

Pláticas de la presión arterial: Hypertension Education in the Hispanic Community

Christine Ferrari

With the help of the Weinberg Memorial Library, I was able to complete my senior Honors project, which allowed me to impact the health of six individuals. I began conducting research for my senior honors project and thesis in spring 2012. In hindsight, I admit I was clueless. I knew I wanted to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a hypertension educational intervention for Hispanics; however, beyond that, I did not know where to begin searching for research guiding the design of such a nursing intervention. I began to investigate the topic more seriously in fall 2012 as I was preparing to submit my proposal to the University's Institutional Review Board. The experience gleaned from several nights in the library poring over the library catalogue and databases quickly taught me to be savvier in my research. I learned about some remarkable resources offered by the library that proved invaluable to my project and thesis.

The literature on the topic of hypertension educational interventions for Hispanics is indeed relatively sparse. As a result, finding the studies that did exist became imperative to guide the design of my project. I found many of these articles on CINAHL and PubMed by experimenting with search entries and meticulously sifting through the results of those searches. The Article Linker feature on many of these articles was often extremely helpful. These publications provided me with information about barriers faced by Hispanics in their quest to maintain healthy blood pressures. With this knowledge, I was able to consider these barriers in the design of my intervention for the study's participants avoid or overcome them. I also accessed the work that provided me with an instrument to assess participants' knowledge of hypertension before and after the intervention. This was vital to achieving the study's purpose of

evaluating the effectiveness of the educational intervention. Finally, I was able to discover the few studies that have been published evaluating the effectiveness of hypertension educational interventions with Hispanics. These guided the study's design and led me to carry out a six-week program focusing on non-pharmacologic lifestyle modifications.

Some of the works that proved most crucial to my review and my study came from Interlibrary loan. This service provided me with access to an expansive bonanza of information.; the possibilities were almost limitless. Interlibrary loan allowed me to mine the expertise from the findings of several other studies that I would not have had access to otherwise. It also led me to the most recent edition of the print book of Health Promotion in Nursing Practice (Pender, Murdaugh, & Parsons, 2011). This work discusses the Health Promotion Model, which served as the theoretical framework for my study. I could never have designed and implemented a successful intervention without the sources I obtained via Interlibrary loan.

In order to provide the safest, highest quality care, the nursing profession has committed itself to practice that is grounded in evidence. This is impossible if one does not have access to this body of nursing knowledge. The resources at the library made it possible for me to successfully educate Hispanic individuals about hypertension. The research process involved in this project instilled in me an appreciation for the importance of having access to the latest scholarly literature to provide the best nursing care possible. Without the evidentiary support, we would be performing arbitrary care that could put patients at risk for harm. As a nurse, I now know the importance of never giving up in seeking answers that could save lives.

The resources from the Weinberg Memorial Library undoubtedly enabled me to write my Honors thesis. They have left me feeling well-equipped to navigate whatever graduate education and professional research in which I may participate in the future. More importantly, however,

they allowed me to design and implement a nursing intervention that taught Hispanic individuals about hypertension and provided them with the tools to reduce their risk for a detrimental disease. Thanks to the resources from the library, these individuals have a better chance to happier, healthier, and longer lives.