

A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF PLÁTICA AS IT RELATES TO REASSURANCE IN THE MEXICAN AMERICAN ELDER

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Purpose: A preliminary study was conducted to examine the Mexican American cultural tradition of *plática* in relation to the concept of reassurance with patients who have hypertension. Based on the experience of a community health nurse working on her graduate studies with the University of the Incarnate Ministerio de Salud it was determined that utilizing this concept of *plática* could in fact be the link needed when offering reassurance to patients of Mexican American heritage.

Methods: A qualitative analysis of the nurse-client interactions with elders in a community setting was carried out with a sample of 24 clients, age 64 to 85 years of age. A review of literature was conducted on the concept of reassurance and *plática* and was used for the preliminary analysis of the interactions. Three vignettes were analyzed to illustrate *plática* and its relationship to reassurance.

Findings: A working form of conception using *plática* was developed in relationship to reassurance of Mexican American elderly. Analysis of three vignettes using the words of trust (*confianza*), respect (*respecto*) and rapport (*personalismo*) may be linked with *plática* (small talk). Initiating *plática* (small talk) before a health history or health assessment helped the client feel comfortable, reassured and willing to participate in health promotion activities. A hypothetical model of the relationships between *plática*, *confianza*, *respecto* and *personalismo* and the relationship to reassurance was developed.

Outcomes: It is hypothesized that *plática* is an expectation among Mexican American elders. It is defined as engaging in an exchange of small talk and may be an important dimension of social relationships. Future analysis is needed to determine how *plática* is related to gaining the patient's trust (*confianza*), respect (*respecto*) and rapport (*personalismo*) in order to ascertain key information which is vital to the promotion of health care outcomes.