

A Photonovel: *Embarazo y Diabetes*/Pregnancy and Diabetes

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BACKGROUND

The Latino population in North Carolina has grown 400% in recent years. Many Latinas receive inadequate prenatal care and are at risk for developing gestational diabetes. This puts both mother and baby at greater risk for developing Type 2 diabetes later in life. In addition, if high blood sugar is not controlled during pregnancy, it can cause health problems for the mother and baby during and after birth.

A nationwide search revealed few culturally relevant materials to educate Latinas on gestational diabetes. To address this critical gap, a photonovel, which is like a comic book with photographs, was developed using a community-based participatory process. The story targets Latino women of childbearing age. It will be the premier *novela* for the launching of the national Teach-With-Stories Free Publication Network.

Photonovels or *fotonovelas* are a culturally familiar format in Latin American countries and well-suited for those with lower literacy skills.

PURPOSE

Lucia's story focuses on the emotional impact of receiving a gestational diabetes diagnosis. Designed to be reassuring, the story:

- Helps dispel **common myths** and reinforces the message that **diabetes is controllable**.
- Supports **readiness** for behavioral change and **movement** through the stages of change related to gestational diabetes self-care (for women and potentially family members and other support persons).

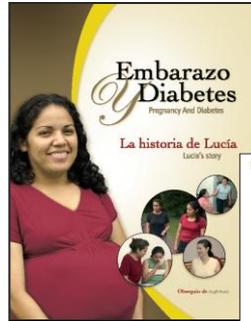
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Unique Public/Private/Non-Profit Partnership: With funding from a chapter grant from the March of Dimes North Carolina Chapter, the Hispanic Immigrant Health Initiative, a local community-based hospital program, Auger Communications and Inter-Am collaborated, using PDSA cycle methodology to develop the story.

Learning objectives: Derived from triangulating the information gained from focus groups with Latinas (n=24), an expert panel (n=6), interviews with health professionals and educators (n=7), and a review of existing literature and published materials.

Theoretically-grounded development process: Informed by Relational-Cultural theory and several behavior change theories: Health Belief model, Stages of Change and Reasoned Action theories. Also incorporates principles related to health literacy and women's ways of learning.

Community Grant from March of Dimes Plants Seed for National Free Distribution Network



- Culturally Relevant
- Easy-to-Read
- Extensively Field-Tested with Latinos and Health Professionals



A Tool for Health & Literacy



- Bilingual, side-by-side layout
- Numbered dialog boxes
- Glossary words linked with story
- Interactive 'self-care' section

RESULTS

The final photonovel reflects four cycles of field-testing and revisions based on feedback from members of the target audience (n=50) and a multi-disciplinary panel of health professionals.

- **Culturally Appropriate:** The storyline was based on the actual experience of a Latina with gestational diabetes. For a more universal story, the voices and experiences of other Latinas in the focus groups and key issues/messages identified from the needs assessment process were also included.
- **Linguistically Appropriate:** The story was written first in Spanish, by a member of the target audience, translated in English, and then back translated. Field-testing with members of the target audience helped ensure cultural and language appropriateness, clarity, and readability.
- **Medically Accurate:** Clinicians and diabetes educators who work with the target audience were also reviewers.

DISCUSSION

Why a story about a woman who just learns she has gestational diabetes?

- A diagnosis of gestational diabetes can be particularly **overwhelming** for a Latina due to the prevalence of diabetes and associated problems that many witness among their families and friends with the disease. This is particularly true for Latinas from low-income or uninsured families since diabetes if left untreated or is not treated until later stages of the disease, can manifest, for example, as poor quality of life, blindness, loss of limbs, or death.
- **Misinformation** can also add to a Latina's fear and sense of despair. Our needs assessment process confirmed studies that suggest misperceptions exist related to insulin. Specifically, that insulin causes diabetes-related problems. This perception may be associated with the timing of care, i.e., by the time insulin is used the diabetes is already in its later stages.
- Clinicians and educators stressed the **importance of dealing with the initial emotional impact**. They reported women dropping out of the system of care and/or they could not absorb the education, let alone act on it, until the emotional and psychological dimensions were addressed.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

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JOIN the Teach-With-Stories Network to receive a **free supply** of this photonovel when the Network is launched!

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