

# Health of Mexican Elderly in United States and Mexico: A Comparative Perspective



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# Objective

- Our aim is to analyze the health conditions of the elderly population of Mexican origin residing in the United States and the health conditions of the older people in Mexico.

# Data Sources

- We use as data sources the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) 2012 and the Mexican Health and Aging Study (MHAS) 2012.
- In the NHIS we distinguish in two groups: the first is considering all those who were born in Mexico (Mexicans) (FIRST GENERATION) and in the second group are those who were born in the United States (Mexican-American) but have some Mexican origin (parents or grandparents born in Mexico) (SECOND GENERATION).
  - Among the Americans, Non-Hispanic whites were considered for being the group that usually has better conditions in comparison with other Americans (e.g. African Americans).
  - In both surveys we considered as older people: 60 years and older

# Background: Health and migration

Some studies suggest that certain diseases are derived from the process of adaptation of migrants to the new country. This means that they adopt behaviors or practices that are associated with the deterioration of the health; for example, the stress provoked by acculturation has been identified as a source of depression, abuse of substances or even obesity (Yabiku, et al., 2009).

- Individuals with longer stays or a higher level of assimilation of the national culture of the United States could have worse health than others, apparently, because the adoption of less-healthy habits, lower consumption of fruit, vegetables and fiber, and with other kinds of nutritional changes considered unfavorable, affects people with a longer stay. Furthermore, mortality is higher among those who stay longer or were younger at the time of migration (Escobar, Lowell and Martin, 2013).

# Results

**Table 1. Percentage distribution of Elderly Mexican People in the United States according to Health Expenses a year, 2012**

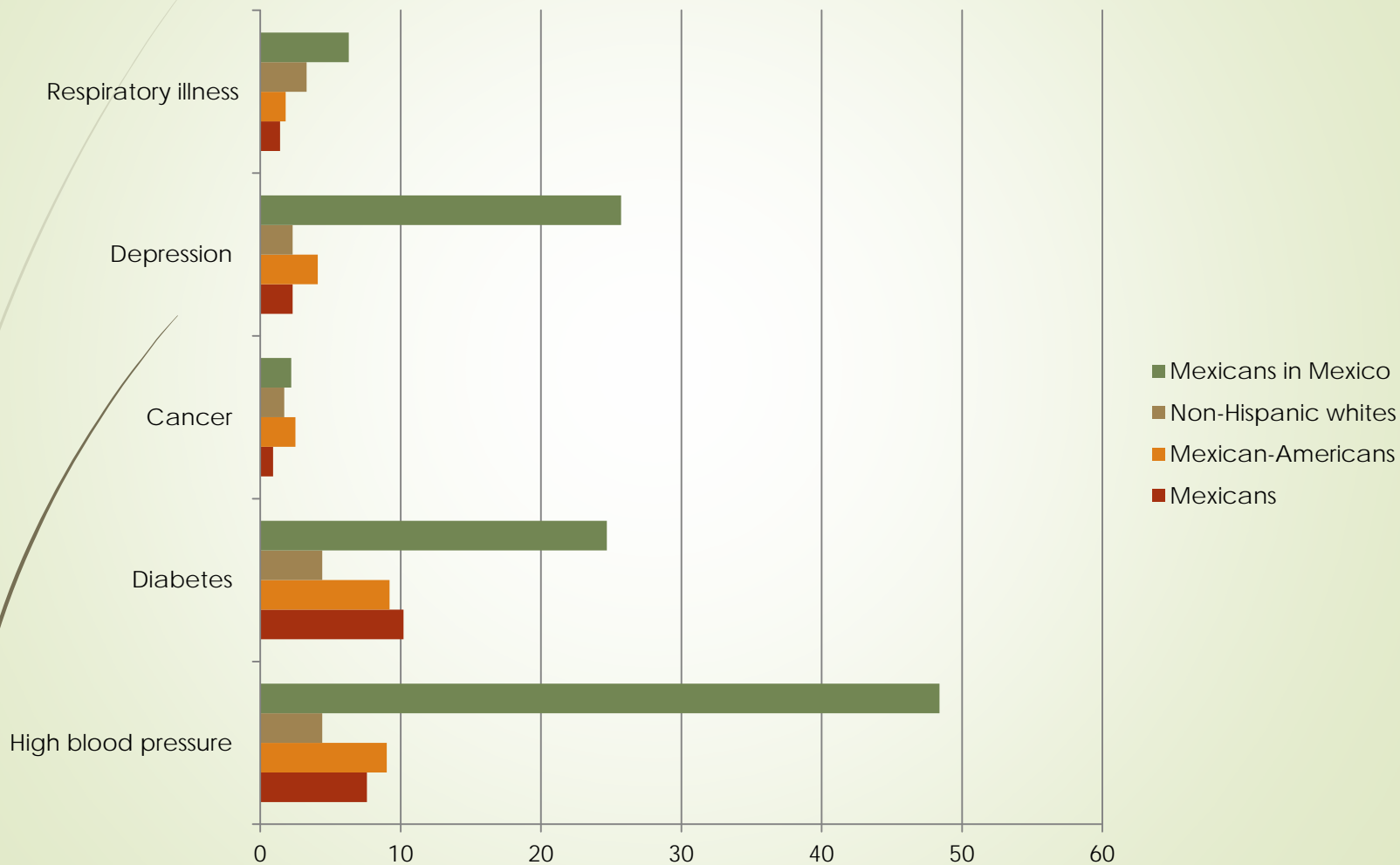
	Mexicans	Mexican-Americans	Non-Hispanic whites
Nothing	14.2	15.9	8.3
Less than 500 dollars	35.3	40.0	31.2
500 - 1999 dollars	26.8	25.3	31.5
2000 - 2999 dollars	9.1	7.3	10.4
3000 – 4999 dollars	5.5	2.5	6.9
5000 or more dollars	5.3	4.5	7.0
Not know	3.8	4.5	4.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: own elaboration based on data from NHIS, 2012.

**Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Elderly Mexican People in Mexico According To Expenditure on Consultations aYear, 2012**

	Expenditure in consultation a year*
Nothing	8.5
Less than 50 dollars	60.2
50 - 99 dollars	14.0
100 - 199 dollars	9.3
200 – 299 dollars	3.3
300 or more dollars	2.8
Not know	2.1
Total	100.0

# Graph 1. Percentage Distribution of Elderly According To Presence of Diseases, 2012





**Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Elderly Mexican People in the United States According To Perceptions of Health, 2012**

	Mexicans	Mexican-Americans	Non-Hispanic whites
Excellent	9.7	11.8	16.8
Very Good	<u>15.8</u>	<u>20.2</u>	<u>29.7</u>
Good	35.0	33.1	31.6
Fair / bad	39.5	34.9	21.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

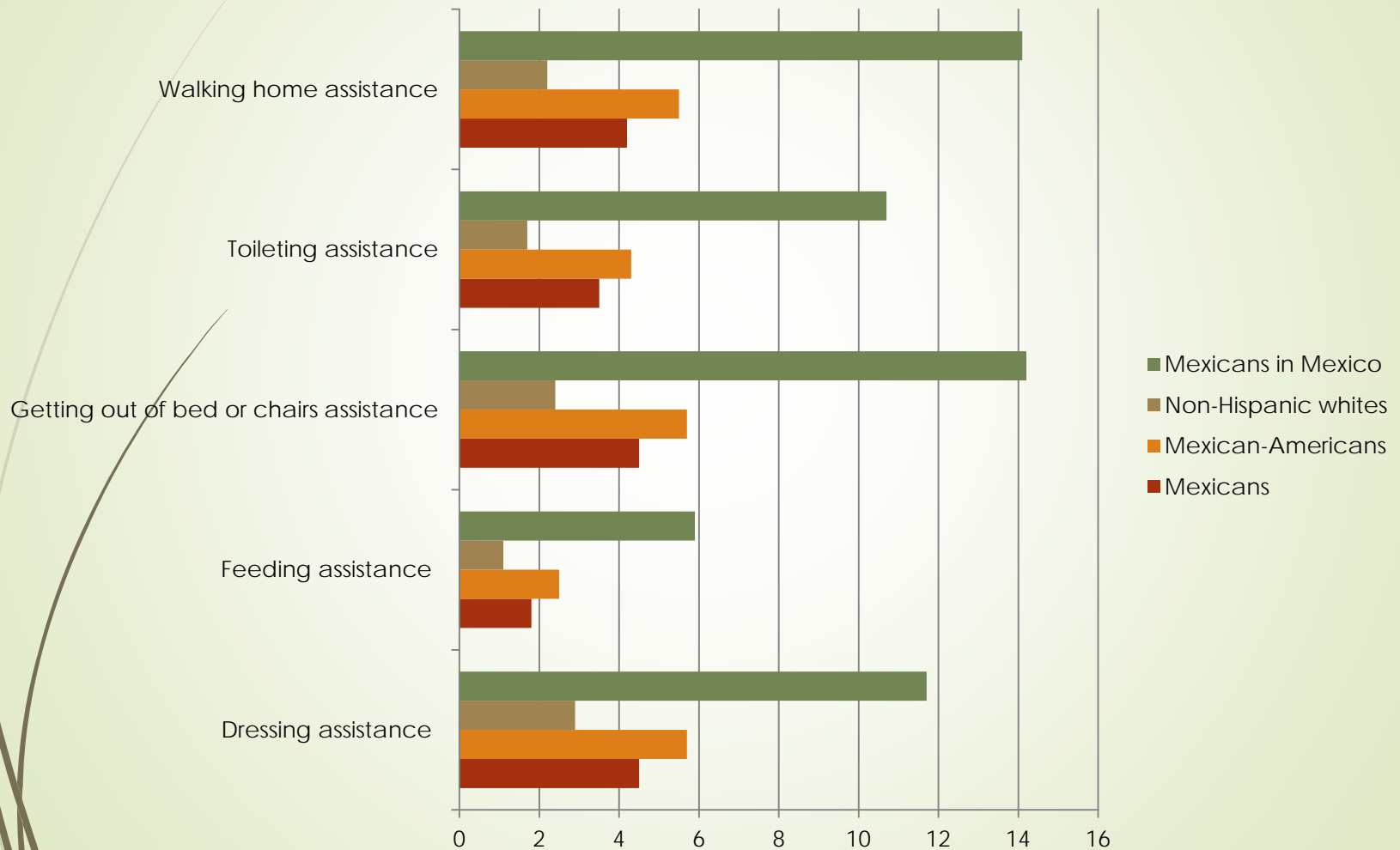
Source: own elaboration based on data from NHIS, 2012.

**Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Elderly Mexican People in Mexico According To Perception of Health, 2012**

	Current perception of health in comparison with the last 2 years
Much better	3.1
Slightly better	9.5
About the same	<u>53.6</u>
Slightly worse	29.1
Much worse	4.6
Total	100.0

Source: own elaboration based on data from the MHAS, 2012.

## Graph 2. Percentage Distribution of Elderly According To Limitations for Different Activities, 2012







# Discussion



- ▶ The comparative analysis has allowed to observe some differences between both populations, for example, it has shown that Mexicans spend very little on their health, this occurs both in Mexico and in the United States; it is possible that this is associated with its socioeconomic level and the presence or absence of diseases; for this reason, both aspects should be incorporated in future studies.
- ▶ The existence of certain diseases among Mexicans showed to be similar among the Mexican population that lives in the United States and the population that resides in Mexico; hypertension, diabetes and depression predominate in both populations. The main difference was found in the proportions, being higher for older adults in Mexico compared with those who live in the United States. Similar behavior is observed in the limitations to perform different activities: dressing, getting out of bed, toileting and moving around the house.

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- ▶ From the findings, it is necessary that future researches consider various factors of labor, economic, family, and contextual characteristics in the older population that can explain their differences, as well as to expand the discussion of the lifestyles of the people in Mexico and United States.
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