

Quantifying Risk: Verbal Probability Expressions in Spanish and English

Lawrence D. Cohn, PhD; Miguel E. Cortés Vázquez, MS; Adolfo Alvarez, MA

Objective: To investigate how Spanish- and English-speaking adults interpret verbal probability expressions presented in Spanish and English (eg, *posiblemente* and *possibly*, respectively). **Method:** Professional translators and university students from México and the United States read a series of likelihood statements in Spanish or English and then estimated the certainty implied by each statement. **Results:** Several terms that are regarded as

cognates in English and Spanish elicited significantly different likelihood ratings. Several language equivalencies were also identified. **Conclusions:** These findings provide the first reported evaluation of Spanish likelihood terms for use in risk communications directed towards monolingual and bilingual Spanish speakers.

Key words: health communication, health literacy, numeracy
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