

Prenatal Care Initiation in Low-income Hispanic Women: Risk and Protective Factors

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Objectives: To examine the psychosocial risk (distress, stress, unintended pregnancy) and protective factors (social support, mastery, familism) associated with entry into prenatal care among low-income Hispanic women. **Methods:** Between April and September 2005, 483 postpartum Medicaid-eligible Hispanic women completed a survey at the hospital. **Results:** Only 69.5% of women initiated prenatal care in their first trimester.

Protective factors were associated with earlier entry into prenatal care. Some risk factors were related to later entry, but relations became nonsignificant after considering protective factors. **Conclusions:** Both protective and risk factors should be considered in evaluating the timing of prenatal care for low-income Hispanic women.

Key words: Hispanic, pregnancy, prenatal care, stress

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