

6<sup>th</sup> Global Diabetes

# Summit and Medicare Expo

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## Community health workers: Effective or ineffective?

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**Aim:** To examine the efficacy of bilingual (English/Spanish) community health workers (CHWs) on improving diabetes outcomes among Hispanics with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

**Methods:** A randomized controlled trial; each participant (N=180), receiving diabetes care at a public primary care clinic, in the South Bronx, New York City, was randomly assigned to an intervention group (IG), an attention control group (ACG), or usual care control group (CG). All groups received usual diabetes care; completed the Diabetes Knowledge Questionnaire pre- and post-intervention; had their A1c, blood pressure (BP), and triglyceride level collected. The ACG was mailed the National Diabetes Education Program materials; and the IG received weekly in-person group diabetes education in English or Spanish, for 5-months; received 2 home visits per month for 2 months; and weekly phone calls for 2 months from the CHW.

**Findings:** Participants ages ranged from 44 to 74 years; 40% were male; 92% preferred to communicate in Spanish; and seven Spanish-speaking countries were identified as country of origin. During the intervention period, the IG showed greater statistically significant improvements in A1c levels, compared to both control groups (ACG and CG). For BP, the IG group showed largest reductions in both systolic and diastolic BP; and showed reductions in triglycerides levels. The IG had a greater increase in diabetes knowledge compared to the ACG and CGs, although all groups showed statistically significant improvements ( $p < .005$ ).

**Conclusions:** Diabetes is causing an increase in mortality and morbidity especially among Hispanics and integration of CHWs may improve and reduce diabetes-complications.

### Biography

Judith Aponte is a Hispanic Nurse, Educator, Researcher and Speaker. She is a tenured Associate Professor at Hunter College, School of Nursing, City University of New York. Her research focus is on Hispanics with diabetes. She is a fellow at the Academy of Medicine. She was an awardee and finalist of the 2014 NY/NJ Nursing Excellence in Giving Excellence Meaning award in the category of Advancing and Leading the Profession. She has authored multiple peer-reviewed articles and has received grant funding, to examine diabetes and diabetes-related disparities among Hispanics and interventions that promote optimum health and minimize complications.

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