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# Mexican-American Women's Perceptions of Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Risk

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## Exploring the Perceptions of Cardiovascular Disease Risk among Mexican-American Women with Type II Diabetes

### **Abstract**

**Background:** Latinos are twice as likely than non-Latinos to have diabetes mellitus type two (DMII) and are two to four times more likely to develop cardiovascular disease (CVD). Limited knowledge exist on the perceptions of CVD risk among Mexican-American women with DMII. This qualitative descriptive study explores the perceptions of diabetes and CVD risk among Mexican-American women living with DMII. **Method:** A sample of six Mexican-American woman with DMII completed a semi-structured interview. Demographic and acculturation level was obtained. Transcripts were analyzed for overall themes derived from participant's responses. **Results:** Two major themes emerged; difficulty in controlling diabetes and impact on daily living. An interesting theme that was constantly mentioned was emotions related to disease pathology or management. All six participants reported they are at risk for a CVD, but only four reported ways to reduce their risk for a CVD. Only four participants reported DMII as a risk factor for CVD. Participants lacked knowledge about CVD risk factors and symptoms of heart attack and stroke. **Conclusion:** Findings from this study suggest that education is needed about DMII, CVD risk factors and symptoms of heart attack and stroke. Health care providers would benefit from understanding the population's perceptions of their DMII and perceptions of risk for CVD to formulate education interventions for diabetics and their individualized risk for CVD.

**Keywords:** diabetes mellitus II, type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, Mexican American, women's health, perceptions