

Many Hispanics Lack Usual Health Care Provider

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WASHINGTON — Hispanics may place significant stress on the health care system in the future, as they are projected to be the largest segment of the population by 2050 but are less likely to have a usual source of care and have less knowledge about chronic disease, according to new data from the Pew Hispanic Center and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Hispanic population will triple from 2008 to 2050, rising from 47 million today to 133 million in 4 decades. By 2050, Hispanics will make up 30% (131 million) of the nation's total population of an estimated 439 million, according to the Census Bureau.

And, as the nation ages overall, the number of Hispanics who are aged 65 years and older also will rise. By 2050, 88 million people will be older than 65 years old, according to the Census Bureau.

Currently, there are some 45 million Hispanics in the United States, 30 million of whom are adults, according to a new report by the Pew Hispanic Center, "Hispanics and Health Care in the United States: Access, Information and Knowledge." The Pew Hispanic Center, in conjunction with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, conducted a national telephone survey in mid to late 2007. Overall, about 4,000 Hispanic individuals completed the survey.

Survey data showed that Hispanics gen-

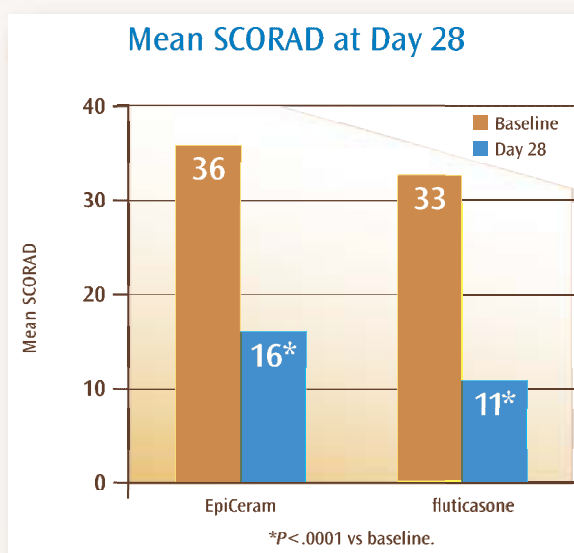
erally tend to be young and healthy, but have a high prevalence of obesity and a predisposition to diabetes, indicating a potential future crisis, said Susan Minushkin, deputy director of the Pew Hispanic Center, in a briefing with reporters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has estimated that 10% of Hispanics have diabetes, 20% have hypertension, 40% are overweight, and 27% are obese, she said.

Therefore, it is worrisome that 27% of

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Scoring of Atopic Dermatitis (SCORAD) is a clinical tool that assesses severity and intensity of atopic dermatitis.

References: 1. Data on File. A prospective, randomized, investigator-blind, controlled, pilot study comparing the effect of EpiCeram device versus conservative standard of care therapy utilizing mid-strength topical steroid (fluticasone propionate 0.05%) in the treatment of atopic dermatitis in pediatric patients. Promius Pharma LLC, Bridgewater, NJ; 2008. 2. EpiCeram[®] [package insert]. Promius Pharma, LLC, Bridgewater, NJ; 2008.

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Hispanics—approximately 8 million adults—lacked a usual health care provider, said Ms. Minushkin. Only 62% of Hispanics without a usual provider had a blood pressure check in the last 2 years, compared with 86% of those who have a provider, the Pew Center found. Only 67% of those lacking a usual provider had a blood sugar test in the last 2 years, compared with 90% of those who have a provider.

Diabetes knowledge was inconsistent, even among those diagnosed with the disease, the Pew Center found. Twenty-seven percent of diagnosed diabetics answered at least three of a battery of eight questions

about the disease incorrectly, for instance. Overall, Hispanic women were more likely to give correct answers, as were middle-aged Hispanics of both sexes. Immigrants had the least amount of knowledge.

Those who did not have a usual health care provider were more likely to be young (aged 18-29 years), to lack a high school diploma, and to be uninsured. They also were more likely to be predominantly Spanish-speaking and to be foreign-born but not yet legal permanent residents. Mexicans and Central Americans were most likely to lack a usual provider.

However, 45% of those who did not have a usual provider had health insurance.

The primary reason—given by 41% of respondents—for not having a usual health care provider was that they were seldom or never sick. Another 13% said they treat themselves or don't use a physician. Eleven percent said the cost of care was prohibitive, 2% said they didn't know where to go for care, and 1% said they couldn't find a provider who spoke their language.

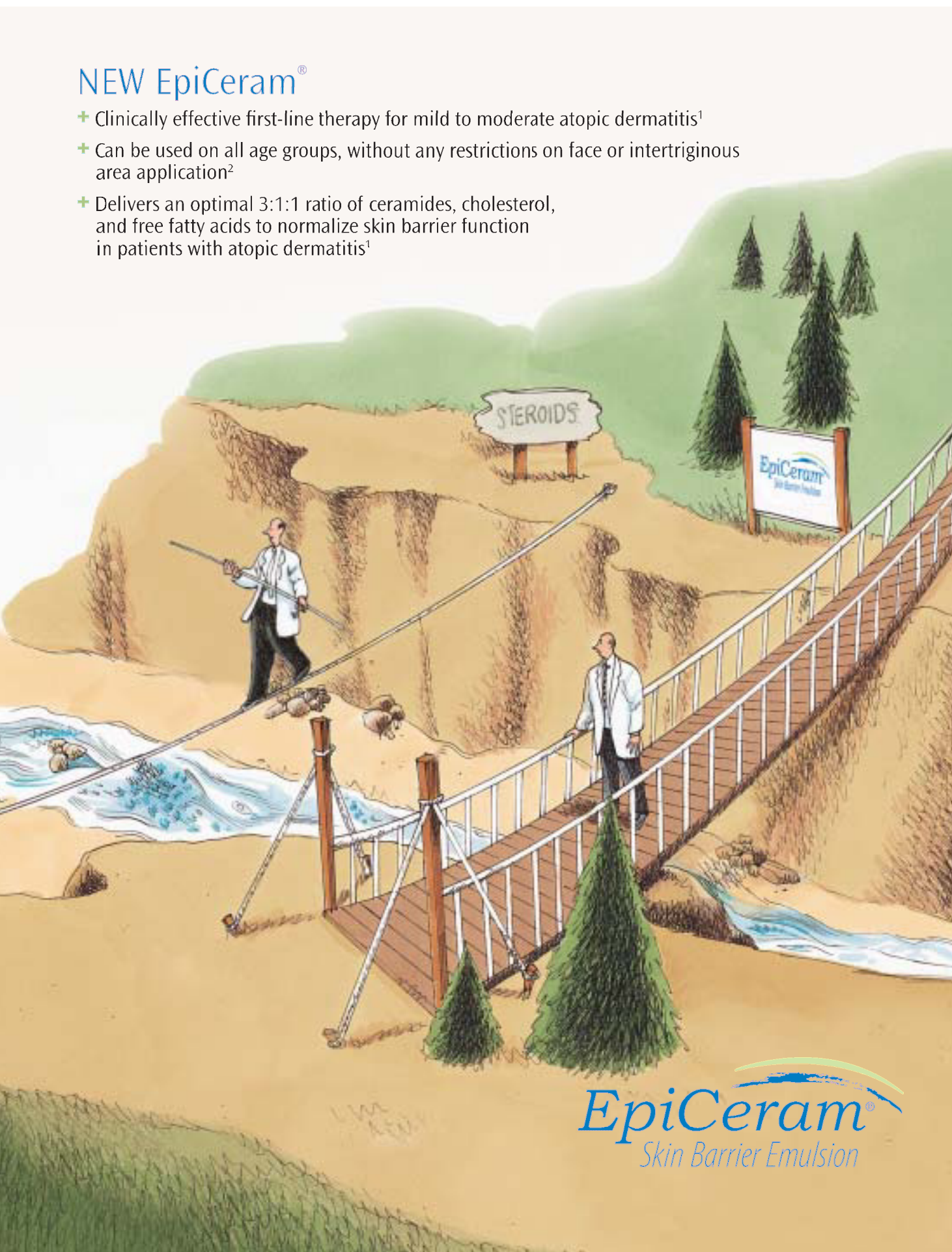
Though the vast majority—78%—rated the quality of their care as good or excellent, some 25% said the care they received was poor, which they blamed on their ethnicity or their English-speaking skills or accent.

More than two-thirds of respondents (71%) said they received information about health from a physician or other medical professional, but 83% said they received it from the media. "I can't comment on whether the information they are getting is good or bad," said Ms. Minushkin, adding that the Pew Center did not ask what types of media were being cited.

But, she added, "those who do get information from the media make changes in their behavior." About 40%-64% said the information affected decisions on how to treat an illness, led them to ask a physician a new question, or changed the way they thought about diet or exercise. ■

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