

## Language Differences and Assessment Modality: Spanish-speakers, telephone use, and the unhoused of Los Angeles County

In this secondary analysis, we analyzed linguistic differences and modes of assessment that impact the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), a measure of houseless need. In practice, higher VI-SPDAT scores lead to higher housing priority. A preliminary analysis of covariance revealed a relationship between the client's acuity scores, their primary language, and survey modality. We examined LA Family Housing's data through the lenses of social presence theory, the degree to which clients are 'present' during communication, and linguistic racism. To demonstrate this, we hypothesized that Spanish-speakers and those who received assessment via phone would receive lower acuity scores. Findings confirmed these hypotheses. We found there were significant differences in assessment scores if clients did not speak English nor get assessed in-person. This study can better inform housing agencies of their uses of modality and language.