

Stress of Immigration Survey (SOIS)

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More information about the SOIS and the concept of stress due to immigration is available on the Center for Aging in Diverse Communities website:

<https://cadc.ucsf.edu/sois>

Stress of Immigration Survey (SOIS)

The 21-item Stress of Immigration Survey (SOIS) assesses stress due to immigration-related issues. The mixed methods approach included concept development, pretesting, field-testing, and psychometric evaluation in a sample of 131 low-income women of Mexican descent. It was developed in Spanish and then translated into English. The SOIS assesses five domains of stress related to:

- Language (limited English proficiency)
- Immigrant status (lack of legal status)
- Work issues (disadvantages in the workplace)
- Yearning for family and home country
- Cultural dissonance within the U.S.

Each domain is measured separately, in addition to a total score. A 5-item short form is available, which is a subset of the 21 items.

Method of Administration

The SOIS is administered by personal interview in which the interviewer provides a brief description of the questionnaire and instructions. This can be done by reading these from the top of the questionnaire. Respondents can then self-administer the survey with the interviewer available to answer any questions. If a respondent indicates that an item is “not applicable,” he/she can just skip it.

A modified visual analogue scale (attached) can be printed and laminated for use by the interviewer. It was developed for respondents with very low literacy. This presents visually an ordinal scale depicting increasing levels of stress. Respondents are asked to choose one number from this figure.

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Publication

Sternberg RM, Nápoles AM, Gregorich S, Paul S, Lee KA, Stewart AL. Development of the Stress of Immigration Survey: A field test among Mexican immigrant women, *Family and Community Health*, 2016; 39(1): 40-52. [PMCID: PMC4747418](#)

- NOTE: An appendix that includes the 21 items in Spanish and English is only available in the print version of the manuscript. [DOWNLOAD MANUSCRIPT PDF](#)



Scoring Instructions: SOIS

Five subscales are scored from the 21 items, in addition to a total score and a 5-item short form scale.

For each scale, calculate average scores for non-missing items. Scores range from 1-5 with higher scores indicating greater stress.

Subscales (# of items)	Item numbers
Subscales	
Limited English proficiency (3)	1-3
Lack of legal immigrant status (5)	4-8
Disadvantages in the workplace (4)	9-12
Yearning for family and home country (2)	13-14
Cultural dissonance with the U.S. (6)	16-21
Summary scores	
SOIS total score (21)	1-21
SOIS short form (5)	2, 6, 10, 14, and 20



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English Translation

Below you will find a list of statements about being an immigrant in the United States. Please circle one number that indicates the level of stress or worry that you have felt in the past 3 months.

In the past 3 months,...	No stress	A little stress	Moderate stress	A lot of stress	Severe stress
1. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you do not speak English well enough to get a good job and to do important things for yourself and your family?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you cannot communicate in English well enough to enjoy life in this country?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel that speaking and understanding English is very difficult?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you are worried that you or your family might be deported?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you cannot get a driver's license because you do not have the right documents?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How much stress or worry have you experienced because documentation problems keep you from getting the things that you need for you and your family?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How much stress or worry have you experienced because documentation problems keep you from getting the health care that you need for you and your family?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How much stress or worry have you experienced because documentation problems make it difficult for you to visit your country?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you do not have a job with benefits like health insurance?	1	2	3	4	5
10. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you do not have a job where you can take time off when you need it (sick days or vacation)?	1	2	3	4	5



In the past 3 months,...	No stress	A little stress	Moderate stress	A lot of stress	Severe stress
11. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you are not able to advance or get a promotion in your job?	1	2	3	4	5
12. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you cannot compete with Americans in your work place?	1	2	3	4	5
13. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you miss your family and friends back in your home country?	1	2	3	4	5
14. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel emotional and sentimental when thinking of your life back in your country?	1	2	3	4	5
15. How much stress or worry have you experienced because of how hard it is to learn how to do things here in the United States (such as signing up your child for school or registering your car)?	1	2	3	4	5
16. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel it is hard it is to face new situations and circumstances here in the United States (such as renting an apartment)?	1	2	3	4	5
17. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel it is hard to raise children in the United States?	1	2	3	4	5
18. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel that cultural differences in the United States are causing conflicts within your family?	1	2	3	4	5
19. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel people discriminate against you and you are treated as a second-class citizen?	1	2	3	4	5
20. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel Americans think that you do not really belong in their country?	1	2	3	4	5
21. How much stress or worry have you experienced because you feel that this is not your country although you live here?	1	2	3	4	5



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Cuestionario del Estrés de Inmigración

Abajo encontrará preguntas relacionadas con su experiencia como inmigrante viviendo en los Estados Unidos. Por favor marque con un círculo el número que corresponda al nivel de estrés o preocupación que haya sentido en los últimos 3 meses.

En los últimos 3 meses,...	No Estrés	Un poco de Estrés	Bastante Estrés	Mucho Estrés	Muchísimo Estrés
1. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted no hable inglés lo suficientemente bien como para encontrar un buen trabajo y realizar cosas que son importantes para su familia?	1	2	3	4	5
2. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted no pueda comunicarse en inglés suficientemente bien como para poder disfrutar de la vida en este país?	1	2	3	4	5
3. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que a usted le resulte muy difícil hablar y entender inglés?	1	2	3	4	5
4. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted o un miembro de su familia puedan ser deportados?	1	2	3	4	5
5. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted no pueda tener una licencia para conducir porque no tiene documentos (papeles)?	1	2	3	4	5
6. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted tenga problemas por falta de documentos (papeles) y no pueda obtener las cosas que usted y su familia necesitan?	1	2	3	4	5
7. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que a usted sin documentos (papeles) le sea difícil conseguir los cuidados de salud que necesita para usted y su familia?	1	2	3	4	5
8. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que los problemas de documentos (papeles) hacen que usted no pueda viajar a su país?	1	2	3	4	5
9. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted no tenga un trabajo que ofrezca seguro de salud?	1	2	3	4	5



En los últimos 3 meses,...	No Estrés	Un poco de Estrés	Bastante Estrés	Mucho Estrés	Muchísimo Estrés
10. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted no tenga un trabajo que ofrezca beneficios, como días libres si esta enferma (o) o si necesita tomar tiempo libre, como vacaciones?	1	2	3	4	5
11. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que no puede avanzar o subir de posición en su trabajo?	1	2	3	4	5
12. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que en su trabajo no puede competir con los americanos?	1	2	3	4	5
13. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted extraña a la familia y amigos que dejó en su país?	1	2	3	4	5
14. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted se sienta triste cuando piensa en su país y extraña la vida en su país?	1	2	3	4	5
15. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que es difícil aprender como es el sistema en los Estados Unidos? (como inscribir a los niños en la escuela o como registrar el carro, por ejemplo)	1	2	3	4	5
16. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que es difícil enfrentarse a situaciones nuevas aquí? (como alquilar un apartamento, por ejemplo)	1	2	3	4	5
17. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que es difícil criar hijos en los Estados Unidos?	1	2	3	4	5
18. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que las diferentes costumbres y creencias están causando problemas en su familia?	1	2	3	4	5
19. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que aquí le tratan como si fuera una persona inferior o de segunda clase y que la gente le discrimina?	1	2	3	4	5
20. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que los americanos no crean que usted realmente pertenece a este país?	1	2	3	4	5
21. ¿Cuánto estrés o preocupación le ha causado el que usted sienta que éste no es su país aunque viva aquí?	1	2	3	4	5





