

**“Latinos & HIV”**  
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**KQED Public Radio**

I came across a new study by Stanford researchers, not yet published, about how Latino immigrants test much later for HIV than most other ethnic groups. The study was going to be presented in a month at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City. I wanted to understand why so many Latino immigrants were late testers. But I realized quickly it was a complicated question that touched upon Latino notions of masculinity and homosexuality, immigration status concerns, social isolation, self-hatred, denial and the tremendous daily stress that comes with surviving in a new country.

At first, it didn't feel like the kind of story I could do in five minutes. But then I found Reuben Echeverria, my main character, through the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. He captured so many of these themes simultaneously. I interviewed several members of his support group, but Reuben's honesty stood out immediately. There was no reason Reuben had to tell me about the painful relationship he had with his son, but he did. His open vulnerability amazed me. Who was I? How could he trust me like that? It was an honor to hear his story and I felt privileged he let me into his life like that.

This radio piece, which originally aired on August 8, 2008, was posted on our website with permission from *KQED Public Radio*, San Francisco.