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Hispanic Media Group Takes a Different Tack Regarding Talk Radio

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The National Hispanic Media Coalition, a group critical of what it considers hate speech, is publicizing a study called "Using Biological Markers to Measure Stress in Listeners of Commercial Talk Radio."

The study, performed by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, involved 13 men who listened to a 23-minute segment of Michael Savage's syndicated "The Savage Nation" radio show. The subjects, 11 of whom described themselves as politically liberal, experienced an increase of cortisol (i.e., hydrocortisone) in their saliva. This the research center indicated could potentially lead to stress-related cancer or chronic inflammatory diseases over a long-period of time.

This was part of a series of studies by the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, aiming to use scientific methodologies to investigate the characteristics and impact of hate speech that is broadcast on commercial talk radio. NHMC President and CEO Alex Nogales drew this conclusion from the study: "Hate speech can be harmful to the people that listen to it. While the impact of hate speech against targeted groups, such as Latinos, has always been easy to imagine, this study demonstrates that the harm is not isolated to targeted groups and that it could, in fact, even harm the physical health of those that are ideologically aligned with the haters."

He added: "For years people have told us to just turn the channel if we don't like what we're hearing, but today we are reminded why that measure is wholly inadequate."

These findings though are unlikely to impress those who would dispute the characterization of Savage as hate speech in the first place. The report is described as a pilot study; it apparently used no control group nor subjected the men to talk hosts they presumably might have found more politically palatable. Nor did it present material such as news or sports programming which might have also produced reactions to which these results might be compared.

The authors did include caveats. They wrote: "Lack of significant statistical correlations between the demographic characteristics of the studied population and the experimental variables examined suggests that the correlations and trends that were observed in the data may represent a general effect that is not specific to race/ethnicity, nativity or ideological alignment with talk radio programs. If further study confirms these findings, the implications are significant with respect to the physiological impact of hate speech on both vulnerable groups and those targeting them. The pilot study established that the methodology described in this report can be useful in future research on the

effects of hate speech. More work needs to be undertaken to determine the correlation between hate speech and the biomarkers studied.+

Here is the [report in PDF format](#).