Entertaining the option of amniocentesis may conjure a multitude of complex issues for which spiritual and/or religious beliefs can aid, influence, and comfort. It has previously been proposed that Latinas’ spiritual and/or religious beliefs influence their amniocentesis decision. However, supporting evidence has been limited. Exploring if and how Latinas utilize their religious beliefs during their amniocentesis decision-making process may give us the opportunity to better understand their genetic counseling experience.

In order to explore the potential influence of religiosity and spirituality on Latinas’ amniocentesis decision-making, semi-structured interviews were conducted, in which participants were invited to describe their religious beliefs and thoughts while considering the amniocentesis. The study aims were: (1) Describe the role structured religion plays in the daily lives of Latinas. (2) Describe the role spirituality plays in the daily lives of Latinas. (3) Investigate how religiosity and spirituality affect healthcare decisions in prenatal diagnosis.

Eleven women were successfully interviewed with three having accepted the amniocentesis. All participants admitted to the influence of religious and/or spiritual beliefs in their everyday lives. Although all women believed in God, the extent to which they could relate to God varied. Most women established their relationship with God through prayer. Women who were more spiritually inclined described their faith and prayer as encompassing their spiritual beliefs. Their beliefs, although unlikely to influence medical decisions, generally consoled them during difficult times. Several women were reluctant to proceed with the amniocentesis given the risk of miscarriage. Yet, they sought comfort in their beliefs and in their faith in God’s will, during their decision-making process.

Findings from this study suggest that the risk of complications related to the amniocentesis played more of a role in the participant’s decision-making process than their religious and spiritual beliefs. Yet, for this group of Latinas, spiritual and religious beliefs provided comfort and validation regardless of their decision about the amniocentesis. Exploring Latinas’ religious and spiritual beliefs during a genetic counseling session may help them feel comfortable with their decisions regarding prenatal diagnosis and recognize the validation they receive from their beliefs.