Adolescent Stress Trajectories in Arab Muslim Immigrant Families

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• Team for the larger study
  – PI, Aroian
  – Statistician, Templin
  – Family expert, Hough
  – Culture expert, Kulwicki
  – 12 Arabic-speaking data collectors
Background

• Daily hassles are ubiquitous

• Relevance to adolescent mental health is through repetitive or sustained effects

• Little is known about the trajectory of daily hassles in Arab Muslim adolescents in immigrant and refugee families to the U.S.
Research Questions

• Which daily hassle domains are most “hassling” for Arab Muslim youth in immigrant families?
  – Parents
  – School
  – Neighborhood
  – Peers
  – Resources
• What is the trajectory of different domains of daily hassles during early, middle, and later adolescence?

• What is the effect of child’s gender and parents’ immigration status (refugee, non refugee) on the trajectory of daily hassle domains?
Study Design

Three wave longitudinal study

Wave 1 (N = 633) (baseline)
Mean Age (S.D. pooled)
13.78 yrs. (2.24)

Wave 2 (N =530) (18 months)
15.33 yrs.

Wave 3 (N =454) (36 months)
16.62 yrs.
Study Criteria

- Family emigrated after 1989 and self-identified as Arab Muslim
- Lived in greater Detroit (Michigan, USA)
- Both mother and one child between the ages of 11 and 15 were willing to participate
- English language and reading ability were *not* required
Measures

• Adolescent Daily Hassles Scale (ADHS; Seidman, et al., 1995)

• Demographic and Migration Questionnaire

• Environmental risk (Hough et al., 2003)
ADHS

- 21 items on 4-point scale (1 = not at all a hassle, 4 = a very big hassle)
- Measures hassles in five domains:
  - Parents
  - Peers
  - School
  - Neighborhood
  - Resources
Demographic and Migration Questionnaire

- Child’s age and age at immigration
- Family immigration status (refugee, non refugee)
- Family years in U.S.
- Child’s gender
- Parents’ education
- Father’s employment
Environmental Risk

• Used as proxy for income
• Reported by the mother
• 14 items about the family’s proximate environment:
  – Functional plumbing and heating in the home
  – Noise, pollution, abandoned homes/lots, and safe playgrounds in the neighborhood
  – Household member witnessed or victim of crime in the neighborhood
Data Analysis

- MANCOVA - effects of immigrant status and gender on adolescent daily hassles
- Polynomial contrasts - Hassle trajectories
- Demographic characteristics potentially confounding the effects of immigration status and gender - identified/included as covariates
  - Father’s occupational status
  - Mother’s educational level
## Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non Refugee (n = 225)</th>
<th>Refugee (n = 199)</th>
<th>Total (n = 454)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s age at immigration</td>
<td>6.18 (5.03)</td>
<td>4.97 (3.16)</td>
<td>5.65 (4.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family yrs. in US*</td>
<td>7.65 (5.05)</td>
<td>8.80 (2.76)</td>
<td>8.16 (4.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Risk</td>
<td>.08 (.10)</td>
<td>.09 (.11)</td>
<td>.09 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child’s gender (% girls)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married mothers</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers employed full or part time*</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers &lt; high school*</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers &lt; high school</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family Country of Origin

- Iraq: 43%
- Lebanon: 36%
- Other: 21%
- Yemen, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Palestine...
ADHS Scores by Immigrant Status

Means

ADHS Subscales

- School
- Parents
- Neighborhood
- Peers
- Resources

Non Refugee
Refugee
ADHS Subscales by Time of Testing
Covariates

- Adolescents with unemployed fathers had significantly more School and Neighborhood hassles
- Adolescents with mothers with a high school education or higher had an increase in School hassles earlier in their adolescent years
Implications for Practice and Future Research

• Arab Muslim youth in immigrant families need help with school stress, particularly
  – those with refugee parents
  – who have unemployed fathers

• Early assistance may prepare youth for later academic challenges, preventing the increase in school hassles observed in this study
Implications for Practice and Future Research

- Given the higher Neighborhood hassles and lower Parent hassles observed in refugee youth in this study, vicarious trauma effects should be assessed in refugee youth.