Sociocultural Factors as Explanatory of Depressive Symptom Development in Latino Adolescents

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Thank you!

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In the United States...

• Latino adolescents consistently report the highest levels of depressive symptoms and disorders when compared to non-Hispanic White, African American, and Asian American adolescents

• Latina adolescents attempt suicide significantly more than their non-Hispanic peers

• Currently, 1 in 5 youth under the age of 18 is Latino

• By 2050, 40% of the youth population will be Latino
Theoretical Framework

Culture & Cultural Traditions
Adolescent Development
Family Functioning

Family Sociocultural Environment

Emotional Vulnerability & Psychosocial Functioning
Subjective Experience of Adolescent-Family Crisis
Suicide Attempt

Zayas, Lester, Cabassa, & Fortuna, 2005
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine individual- and contextual-level sociocultural factors associated with the development of depressive symptoms in Latino adolescents in order to identify salient risk factors to target in the construction of culturally relevant prevention and treatment interventions.
Methods

• Design
  • Cross sectional correlational descriptive study

• Sample
  • Adolescents 12-18 years were recruited through a pediatric primary care clinic in a rural, underserved area

• IRB approval obtained before study initiation

• Standardized measures assessed study variables
  • Acculturation, perceived discrimination, ethnic identity, familism, family conflict, family cohesion, stressful life events, and depressive symptoms
Sample (N=101)

Gender

- 57% Female
- 43% Male

Parental Marital Status

- 77% Married
- 11% Single
- 4% Other
- 8% Separated
Sample

• Age: Mean=14.47 years (SD= 1.91)
• Number of people in household: Mean = 5.96 (SD= 1.48)
• 46% of participants reported elevated levels of depressive symptoms
## Bivariate Associations

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Familism</th>
<th>Family Cohesion</th>
<th>Family Conflict</th>
<th>Depressive Symptoms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>-.123 p=.229</td>
<td>-.438 p&lt;.001</td>
<td>.275 p=.007</td>
<td>-.210 p=.043</td>
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<td>Ethnic identity</td>
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<td>-.216 p=.034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Familism</td>
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<td>-.313 p=.003</td>
<td>.143 p=.176</td>
<td>.243 p=.017</td>
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<td>Family cohesion</td>
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<td>-.592 p&lt;.001</td>
<td>-.289 p=.005</td>
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<td>Family conflict</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.331 p=.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Analysis
Theoretical Framework

Zayas, Lester, Cabassa, & Fortuna, 2005
Step 1

Gender

beta = .120, p = 0.273

Age

beta = -.001, p = .993

Depressive Symptoms

Multiple R = 0.120, p = 0.546
Adjusted R = -.009
Step 2

Multiple R = .548, p<.001
Adjusted R² = .238
~30% variance

Depressive Symptoms

- Age
- Gender
- Perceived Discrimination: \(\beta=.349, p=.001\)
- Ethnic Identity
- Familism: \(\beta=.282, p=.017\)
- Family Conflict: \(\beta=.305, p=.014\)
- Family Cohesion
Step 3

Multiple R = .705, p < .001
Adjusted R² = .445
~50% variance

Depressive Symptoms

- Age
- Gender
- Perceived Discrimination \( beta = .186, p = .039 \)
- Ethnic Identity
- Familism
- Family Conflict \( beta = .307, p = .004 \)
- Family Cohesion
- Stressful Life Events \( beta = .526, p < .001 \)
Limitations

• These results may not be generalizable to Latino adolescents living in other countries, particularly those residing in their county of racial and ethnic origin.
• Relatively small sample size
• Cross-sectional design
• All self-report measures
Conclusions

• The high levels of depressive symptoms in this Latino adolescent sample are concerning
• Confirms prior research documenting high depressive symptom prevalence in this population.
• Large percentage of variance explained by individual- and contextual-level sociocultural factors underscore the need for culturally tailored depression prevention programs that target Latino adolescents.