Oral Session 8

Research Study

Title: "The Relationship between Familial Cohesion and Depressive Symptoms Among Young Adult Latino Immigrants During Their Initial Year in the United States"

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Introduction and Objective. Young adult Latino immigrants face challenges that can affect their mental health throughout the immigration process. There is currently a lack of research regarding potential mitigating factors, such as familial cohesion, on the development of depression amongst 18–34-year-old Latino immigrants. The objective of this study is to assess if familial cohesion is associated with depressive symptoms among young Latino recent immigrants to the USA

Methods. Secondary analysis of data from an on-going longitudinal study aimed at assessing driving and alcohol use behaviors among recently arrived Latino immigrants. Latinx 18–34-year-old immigrants were included. The independent variable was the score for familial cohesion defined as the family acting as a united whole and categorized according to a Likert Scoring System (score: 1-4). Scores ≥3.6 were considered as high family cohesion. Outcome was level of depression symptoms based on the CESD depression scale (score: 10-40). Scores ≥16 were considered as high depression risk signaling presence of the outcome. Multivariable binary logistic regression models were used to assess potential independent associations. Stata software was used for analyses.

Results. We assessed 520 participants. About 42% had low family cohesion scores. Low Cohesion Score participants (LCSPs) have a higher frequency of high depression risk scores (HDRS) than those with high Cohesion Score Participants (HCSPs) (74% vs 62%, respectively p=0.004). The odds of higher depression scores were 1.74 (95%CI: 1.19-2.54, p-value = 0.004) when comparing those with low versus high family cohesion. After adjustments for age, gender, education, income, region of origin, documentation status, and marital status the OR became slight stronger+ 2.03 (95%CI: 1.35-3.05, p=0.001). Conclusion: Higher levels of family cohesion is associated with lowered depression risk among Latino immigrants aged 18-34 during their first year in the United States. Given the intimate relationship between mental health concerns and the immigrant experience, clinicians should be vigilant of the development of depressive symptoms among this population when issues relating to family cohesion appear during history taking

Conclusions-Implications. In conclusion, we found that higher levels of family cohesion is associated with lowered depression risk among Latino immigrants aged 18-34 during their first year in the United States. Given the intimate relationship between mental health concerns and the immigrant experience, further evaluation of this population's experience and its mitigating and contributing factors would be an essential next step to improve this vulnerable group's mental well-being and future outcomes.