Mental Health Experiences of First-Generation Latina Mothers Living in Emerging Communities

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Conflicts of interest

I have no conflicts of interest to disclose

Latino population

• Latinos/as make up 18% of the U.S population
  • 30% of the population by 2050

• Foreign-born population is expected to increase
  • 19% by 2050

• It is important to address the needs of this population
Latino population

Emerging Communities

- Areas that do not have an infrastructure for immigrant resettlement
  - Lack of cultural and linguistic services available
  - Policies are less welcoming of immigrants
  - Increased tensions between long-time residents and immigrants
  - Greater level of distrust from immigrant community

Depression

- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide
- It affects 350 million people
Depression among Latinos

- Lifetime prevalence of depression among Latinos is 15% to 27%
  - Likely under-diagnosed
  - Lower access to treatment
  - Rates vary by nativity and country of origin

Depression among US-born Latinos

- US-born Latinos are the ethno-racial group with the highest rates of depression and suicidal ideation in the US
  - Suicidal ideation among 9th-grade Latina females reaches 40%
  - 18.5% making a suicide attempt
  - US-born Latinos whose parents are immigrants are 2.9 times more likely to attempt suicide
  - Later generations of Latinos are 3.6 times more likely to attempt suicide

Depression among foreign-born Latinos

- Lower rates of depression
  - Rates differ by country of origin
  - Increases with acculturation

Depression among foreign-born Latinos

- Latinos are more likely to seek mental health services in primary care
- Somatic symptoms
  - Nervios (nerves)
  - Dolor en el pecho (chest pain)
  - Dolor en el corazón (chest/heart pain)
  - Feeling "sofocona" (out of breath)

Purpose

To understand the lived experiences of depression among first-generation Latina women living emerging immigrant communities

Methods

Data and Sample
- Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program in Central Illinois

- Inclusion criteria:
  - Mother
  - Has child under 5 years of age
  - First generation Latina (migrated after age 12)
  - Willing to be measured for height and weight
  - Older than 18
Methods: Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Less than HS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>College and more</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Marital status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married/cohabiting</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time spent in the US (years)</td>
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<td>30.00</td>
<td>30.80</td>
<td>30.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
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Methods

Data Collection
- Thirty in-depth interviews, May-September, 2015
- Interviews in Spanish

Data Analysis
- Thematic analysis
  - Open coding – codebook development
  - Development of categories
  - Development of themes

Results: Themes

- Minimization of depressive feelings
Results: Minimization of depressive feelings

“Well, to be honest I feel very sad right now, but it’s normal. My grandmother just passed. Two years ago I lost my mother. And five months ago my other grandmother also passed so it’s normal. To be honest I feel very sad, I still can’t get used to being without my mom. I don’t want to cry. I couldn’t go [to their funeral]… So, yes, to be honest, I cry very often” (10)

Results: Minimization of depressive feelings

“The first year [postpartum] was good. The first few months I think it’s normal to feel sad, but yes they asked me some questions and told me that yes [I was depressed] but that it was normal… I was sad because it was a painful C-section and I felt apathetic about it. But after a while I got over it.” (10)

Results: Minimization of depressive feelings

“I am in love with Crisis Nursery… Although people don’t use it much. I think people are scared of the name. My husband is also upset that I go there, but too bad for him… he tells me, “you’re not in "crisis" but he doesn’t understand it’s not about that. It’s a place to prevent any sort of crisis and I need to prevent it because what do I do if I become sad or I go mad or whatever. What I do? I have no one.” (12)
Results: Themes

- Minimization of depressive feelings
- Lack of social support

Results: Lack of social support

"[I talk] with my husband. He’s a good friend... I can count on him for anything... Although I talk to him about general issues. Otherwise I try to organize my ideas alone"

"Not having my family around me here has consequences. I think if I were in [country of origin] it wouldn’t be so hard. Here, if you don’t maintain your social network, it disintegrates because there aren’t loved ones around." (12)
Results: Lack of social support

“Well, it’s a country where there are a lot of opportunities. But really, I don’t like a lot of things because it’s a really enclosed place. [In my country of origin], you spend all day outside, and here you need a car to go anywhere, and [in my country of origin] you do not. For that reason, it’s really different.” (7)

Results: Lack of social support

“...in the beginning it was a huge change and I was only 19. It was like ‘wow what am I going to do with myself’ and it was wintertime and I was with the baby. So it was like I had to be here inside the house, practically all the time. I didn’t drive... so I practically had to wait for my husband to come home from work and from time to time we’d go out to dinner.” (20)

“Even though it’s a very beautiful country and even though California is very beautiful, I didn’t like it. I felt enclosed. It’s not the same as in our countries. It’s poorer [in our countries], but you feel freer.” (10)

Results: Themes

- Minimization of depressive feelings
- Lack of social support
- Traditional gender roles jeopardize disclosure of depressive feelings
Results: Relative prosperity

“I usually don’t talk to anyone about my feelings, I keep them inside. When we first arrived from [country of origin], I cried a lot because we were in a different country and we had left the family. When I cried my husband used to get mad at me because our son is very perceptive, so he would ask “mommy, why are you crying? It’s probably because you miss your siblings”. So it was like I was transmitting that sadness to him. So now when I feel sad, I wait until night or until they’re sleeping; or I “swallow my sadness”” (24)

Results: Relative prosperity

“One of the reasons I went to Crisis Nursery was because I started to feel a little depressed when my boy was a year and a half. I said to [my husband]: “you know I feel alone, I don’t have a work visa… I am trapped… When I started telling him that, he started talking to me about his problems and in the end he ended up crying. This was the dynamic, so I said, “I can’t [rely] on him”… we get along very well and everything but in the emotional part I am the pillar. So, I asked for help… I went to Crisis Nursery, they offered me a support group and they offer you a psychologist, too… that helped me a lot” (12)

Implications

- Depression is prevalent among Latina immigrant mothers
- Screening tools may not detect it
Treatment for depression

- Most interventions developed for European and African Americans
- Special cultural adaptations are important when working with Latinos/as
  - Increase treatment adherence and effectiveness

How do we effectively adapt interventions?

- In effective programs the cultural adaptations made were:
  - Use of bilingual and bicultural facilitator
  - Simpatía (sympathy)
  - Respeto (respect)
  - Personalismo (warmth)
  - Familismo (familism)
  - Personalismo (warmth)
  - Spanish sayings
  - Idioms
  - Si, pero (yes, but) as substitute for ABCD method
  - Topics related to acculturation
  - Topics related to migration


How do we effectively adapt interventions?

- Logistics
  - Transportation
  - Child care
  - Snacks
Discussion

- Group therapy seemed to be preferred by Latinos
- It is important to include bilingual and bicultural facilitators and include Latino constructs such as familismo and personalismo
- Si, pero seems to be an effective and more culturally appropriate way for cognitive restructuring
- Also, it is important to address the experiences of migration and highlight it as a strength

Take-home messages

- Depression is prevalent among Latino immigrants
- The screening tools we have may not be effective in identifying depression among Latino immigrants
- There are cultural adaptations that can be made to existing interventions to make them more culturally-competent and effective

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QUESTIONS?

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Defining “Latino”

• Umbrella term to refer to people from Spanish-speaking background and trace their heritage to Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Central or South America
• Different experiences
• Different backgrounds
However...
• Importance of family
• Language
• Cultural traits and values
• Religiosity
• Immigration experiences

Appraisal of the evidence

• Studies 2, 6, 7, 8 had a strong methodology compared to the rest of studies
  • Random assignment
  • Large sample sizes
  • Comparison group
  • Follow-up measures
  • Effect sizes available
However the studies lacked:
• In-depth description of the sample
• Detailed descriptions of cultural adaptations made
Overview

- 8 studies showed significant improvement in depressive symptoms
- 4 had control groups; 5 used pre/post but no control group
- 7 included follow-up measures ranging from 2 to 6 months post treatment
- 6 studies had samples that were all Latino/a immigrants
- Duration – sessions ranged from 6 to 12 weeks
- Sample sizes ranged from 5 to 217 participants
- 7 studies were conducted with urban dwellers; 2 studies focused on participants from rural areas
- Most studies were offered in group format