

Latino Immigrant Teens and Parents: Migration and Mental Health



Latino Adolescent Mental Health Adaptation

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Introduction

- The last decade has been characterized by an unprecedented growth in the Latino population of North Carolina.
- Despite the increasing size and economic presence of Latinos in North Carolina and other parts of the U.S. and the urgent calls to action in preventing and treating mental illness, there is little definitive data on the prevalence or etiology of mental health problems among Latino adolescents.
- This study aims to: (1) provide prevalence data on mental health symptoms among first-generation Latino youth, (2) describe the migration and acculturation experiences of immigrant youth and their relationship to mental health, and (3) describe the characteristics of the community, school, and family contexts that affect the mental health of new immigrant youth.

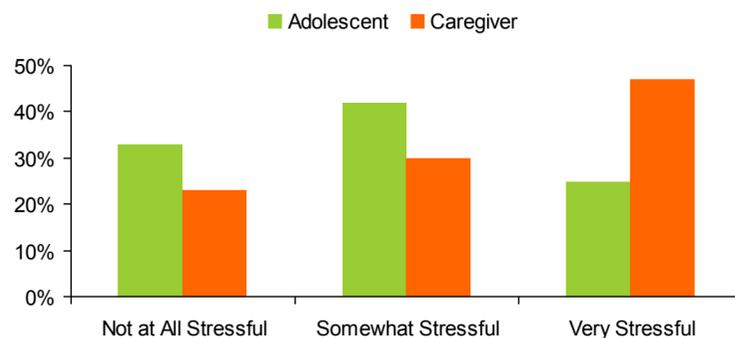
Data

- Data.** The LAMHA study collected data on 283 first-generation Latino immigrant youth ages 12-19 and 283 of their primary caregivers (mostly mothers). Approximately half of the parent sample (n=151) participated in a survey of health service use patterns. Also, qualitative interviews about migration and acculturation experiences were completed with 20 Latino youth.
- Sample Design.** To locate possible participants, high schools were chosen using a stratified random sample. High schools serving large, high growth Latino communities were classified into two strata - urban and rural. A total of 4 urban and 6 rural school districts including 11 high schools and 14 middle schools participated in the study.

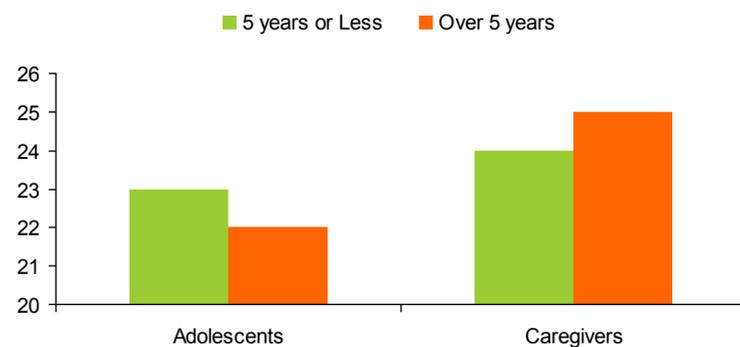


http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/lamha

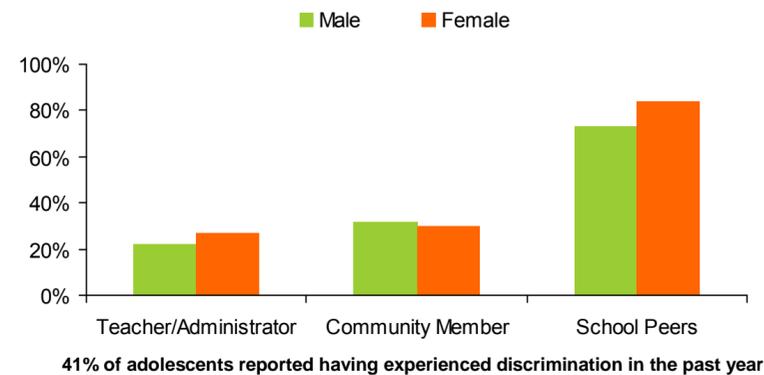
Stress of Migration Experience Among Adolescents and their Caregivers



Adolescent and Caregiver Reports on Familism by Time in the U.S.



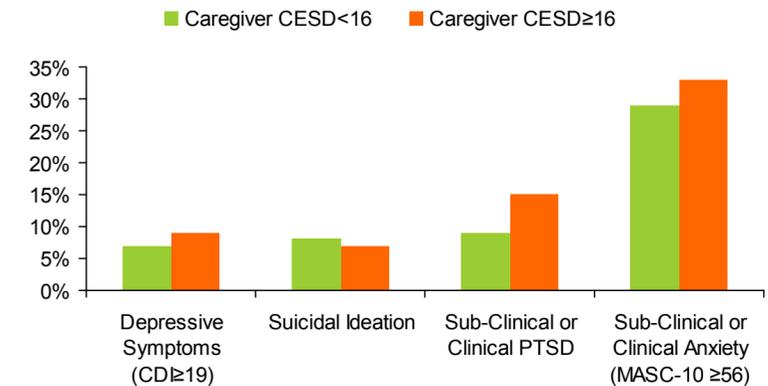
Sources of Discrimination Reported by Adolescents



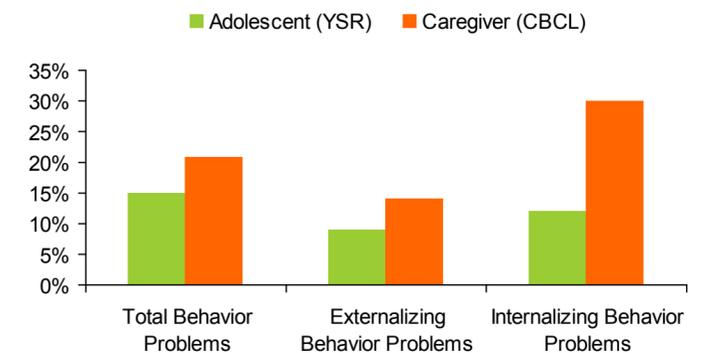
It was like the world just turned upside down for me. I was like why did we move? We had to come here and now I gotta learn this other language and yeah, it was killin' me, I had to go to school and I heard everybody around me just talking and I was like "what are they sayin'?" It was a complete change from where I used to live. And everything just turned upside down, the language, the way I had to do things. I had to sleep with my parents, I had to share rooms with other people I didn't even know...It was strange, hard.



Adolescent Mental Health by Caregiver Depressive Symptoms



Child Behavioral Problems Reported by Adolescents and their Caregivers



Conclusions

- Migration Journey.** Latino immigrant youth were brought to the U.S. as part of their parents' decisions to secure economic stability and to improve the life chances of their children. While the majority of caregivers and adolescents claimed that the migration process was stressful, both overwhelmingly felt that the decision to migrate was the best decision.
- Family Experiences.** As the immigrant Latino population adapted to their new settings and social norms, family was an important source of personal support for all adolescents and caregivers.
- Discrimination Experiences.** Discrimination kept adolescents and their parents from truly feeling a part of their communities. Despite discrimination, both caregivers and adolescents continued to acculturate with time in the U.S.
- Caregiver and Adolescent Health.** While few adolescents were engaged in risky behaviors, many reported clinically significant signs of externalizing and internalizing behaviors. In addition, depression (males 5%, females 10%), suicidal ideation (males 4%, females 11%), PTSD (males 10%, females 8%), and anxiety (males 28%, females 31%) were of significant concern for a sizeable percent.

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