



*Language matters:  
Implications of sexual content  
in fictional narrative television programs  
popular among Latino adolescents*

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# *Objectives*

1. Describe the prevalence of sexual content in Spanish- and English-language fictional narrative television programs popular among Latino adolescents.
2. Articulate differences in sexual content between Spanish- and English-language programs.
3. Suggest implications for public health interventions related to Latino adolescent sexuality.

# *Background: Latino Population*

- ◆ Latinos represent the largest ethnic minority group in the US
- ◆ Diversity of languages, socioeconomic status, immigration history, cultures



Sources: Hobbs and Stoops (2002); Suarez and Ramirez (1999)



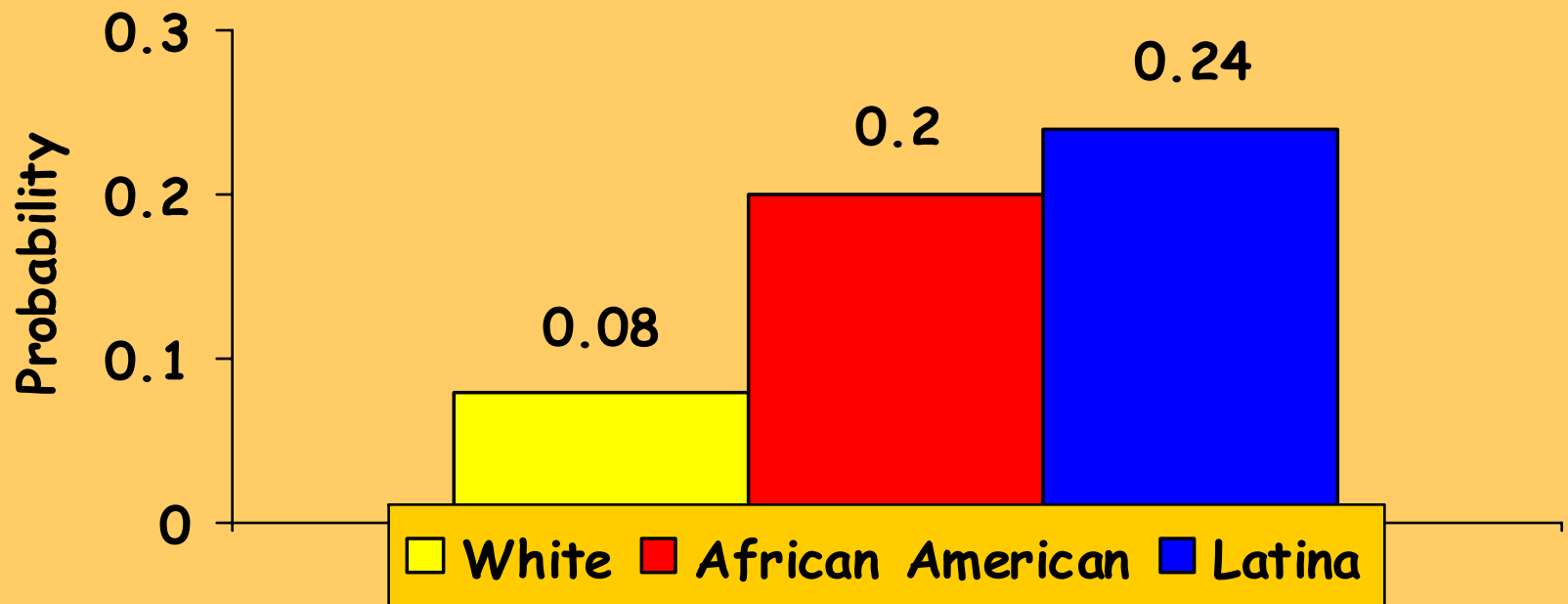
## *Background: Behavior*

- ◆ Latino adolescents less likely to be sexually experienced than their African American counterparts
- ◆ Latino adolescent males more likely to be sexually experienced compared to Latinas
- ◆ Compared to other ethnic groups, Latino adolescents less likely to use condoms or birth control pills

Source: Abma (2004)

# *Background: Reproductive Health*

First birth by age 20, among females  
15-24 years of age: US, 2002



Source: Abma (2004)



# *Background: Television*

## ◆ Consumption

- Latino youth watch more television than White peers
- Television largest portion of Latino adolescent media diet
- Latinos use television as a source of information about sexual health

## ◆ Access

- Latino youth just as likely to have a television
- Latino youth just as likely to have premium cable channels

Sources: Hu et al (1989); Essien et al (2000); Roberts et al (2005)



# *Theoretical Foundation*

- ◆ Social Cognitive Theory
  - Observational learning
  - Outcome expectancies
  - Self-efficacy
- ◆ Cultivation Theory
  - Media offers homogenous messages
  - High consumption of media impacts individual's perception of reality

# Methods: Content Analysis

- ◆ Study sample selection criteria
  - Program:
    - Fictional narrative TV programs
    - Popular according to Nielsen ratings
    - Aired between February 27, 2006 and May 7, 2006
  - Scene:
    - Contain sexual content
- ◆ Units of analysis
  - Episode (n=70)
    - Spanish (n=34)
    - English (n=36)
  - Scene (n=433)





# *Coding Scheme: Sexual Content*

## Sexual Talk

- ◆ Comments about sexual actions or interests
- ◆ Talk about sex that has occurred
- ◆ Talk toward sex
- ◆ Talk about sex crimes
- ◆ Expert advice
- ◆ Other



## Sexual Behavior

- ◆ Physical flirting
- ◆ Passionate kissing
- ◆ Intimate touching
- ◆ Sexual intercourse implied
- ◆ Sexual intercourse depicted
- ◆ Other



# *Coding Scheme: Other Content*

- ◆ Character demographics

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity



- ◆ Sexual risk/responsibility





# *Methods: Content Analysis*

- ◆ Reliability analysis
  - 15 episodes coded by all coders
  - Reliability assessed by percent agreement and Scott's *pi*
    - *Unitizing:*  
(% agreement = 91.8%;  $pi = .70$ )
    - *Talk variables:*  
(% agreement = 93.8%;  $pi = .75$ )
    - *Behavior variables:*  
(% agreement = 92.0%;  $pi = .83$ )
    - *Risk/responsibility variables:*  
(% agreement = 92.0%;  $pi = .30$ )

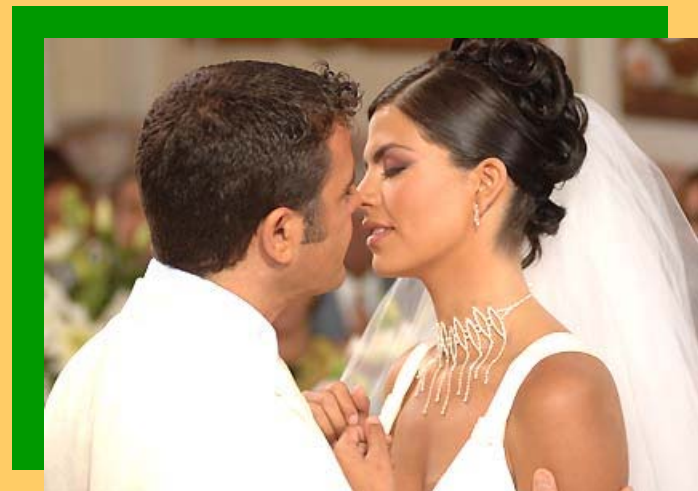
# Results

## Talk

- ◆ Episode: 90%
- ◆ Scenes: 82.7%
- ◆ Risk/responsibility addressed in 6.42% of scenes

## Behavior

- ◆ Episode: 73%
- ◆ Scene: 33.9%
- ◆ Risk/responsibility addressed in 0% scenes



# Results

	( <i>N</i> = 187) English scenes <i>n</i> (%)	( <i>N</i> = 171) Spanish scenes <i>n</i> (%)	Pearson $\chi^2$ ( <i>p</i> -value)
Infidelity talk	Yes	24 (26.09)	31.95 (.000)
	No	163 (61.28)	
Infidelity behavior	Yes	6 (17.65)	31.99 (.000)
	No	80 (72.07)	

# Results



- Males more often instigated behaviors in both Spanish- and English-language scenes
- Vast majority of scenes in which females clearly instigated behavior was found in English- rather than Spanish-language scenes (70.59% versus 29.41%; Fisher's exact  $p = .016$ ).



# *Implications for health interventions*

1. Address sexual risk and responsibility
2. Use media in both Spanish- and English-language in media literacy
3. Take into account the role of gender
  - (boys) machismo = condom use
  - (girls) marianismo = advocate for own health
4. Incorporate parents and family members who may co-view programs with youth
  - Self-efficacy
  - Communication skills



# *Study Limitations*

- ◆ Cross-sectional
- ◆ Not address actual audience exposure or interpretation
- ◆ Coders not adolescent
- ◆ Critique of Nielsen Latino data
- ◆ Coding instrument not include all relevant cultural constructs





# *Areas for Future Research*

- ◆ Audience studies with Latino youth regarding interpretation of content, importance of role models
- ◆ Content analyses of other popular mass media (ie music)
- ◆ Evaluation of interventions studies (ie media literacy)



# *Study Strengths*

- ◆ Focus on Latino population
- ◆ Complement to previous literature
  - Latino adolescent sexuality
  - Sexual content on television
- ◆ Ability to inform sexual health interventions for Latino adolescents



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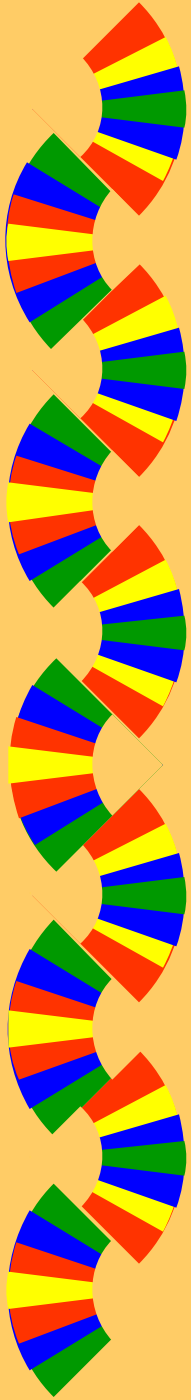
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