

# Latinos Immigrant Adolescents and Gender Ideology: Implications for Safer Sex

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# Latinos in the US

- Latinos make up 13% of the US population
- By 2020, the Latino population is projected to double to 70 million, or 21% of the US
- The number of Latinos in the US today is bigger than the population of Canada – Latinos in the US constitute the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Spanish speaking country in the world
- Pew Hispanic Center estimates 11 million undocumented individuals in the US – 6 million from Mexico and 2.5 million from other Latin American countries
- Diversity of Latinos in US

# Young Latinos in the US

- The median age for the entire US was 35.3 whereas the median age for Latinos in the US was 25.9 (Census Bureau)
- Latinos accounted for half the population growth in the US in 2005.
  - Births rather than migration is the largest source of population growth in the US

# HIV and Latinos

- Latinos make up 13% of the US population yet make up 18% of those infected with HIV
- Men:
  - Most men infected through sex with men, followed by drug use and heterosexual sex
  - Third leading cause of death among men 35 to 44 in 2002
- Women:
  - Most women infected through heterosexual sex (73%), followed by drug use – almost one-in-four HIV infections among Latinos occurs in women (23%)
  - Fourth leading cause of death among women 35 to 44 in 2002

# HIV and Latino adolescents

- Latinos ages 13–19 represent 16% of U.S. adolescents, yet they accounted for 21% of new HIV cases among teens in 2003
  - The prevalence of HIV in 13- to 19-year-old Latino adolescents is five times more than White adolescents of the same age.
- Latino adolescents are less likely to use condoms than either their African-American or White counterparts (Youth Risk Behavior Survey)
  - Heterosexual contact is the major mode of HIV transmission among Latino adolescents who have a higher incidence of:
    - sexual intercourse before the age of 13
    - multiple sexual partners than White adolescents

# Rates of HIV among Latinos are only part of the story

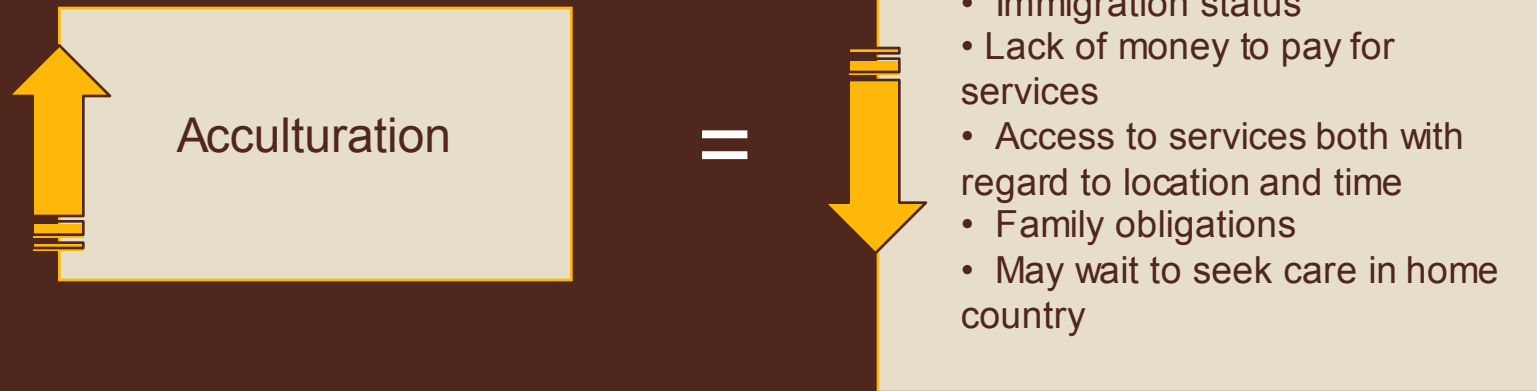
- Due to limitations and contextual factors, HIV rates among Latinos most likely underestimated
  - Limitations in access to health care:
    - Immigration status (documentation)
    - Language barriers (confusing health care system)
    - Low perception of HIV risk on part of providers and clients
    - Lack of money to pay for services
    - Access to services both with regard to location and time
    - Family obligations
    - May wait to seek care in home country (urgent vs. preventive)

# Acculturation

- Refers to a complex set of phenomena resulting from continuous contact between groups of individuals from different cultures (Berry 2003) – a process of familiarization and adaptation to new cultures
- Several terms related to acculturation (biculturalism, assimilation)
- Operationalized by different variables:
  - Nativity status
  - Ethnic identity
  - Immigration
  - Length of time in the US
  - Language proficiency
  - Language preference

# Acculturation

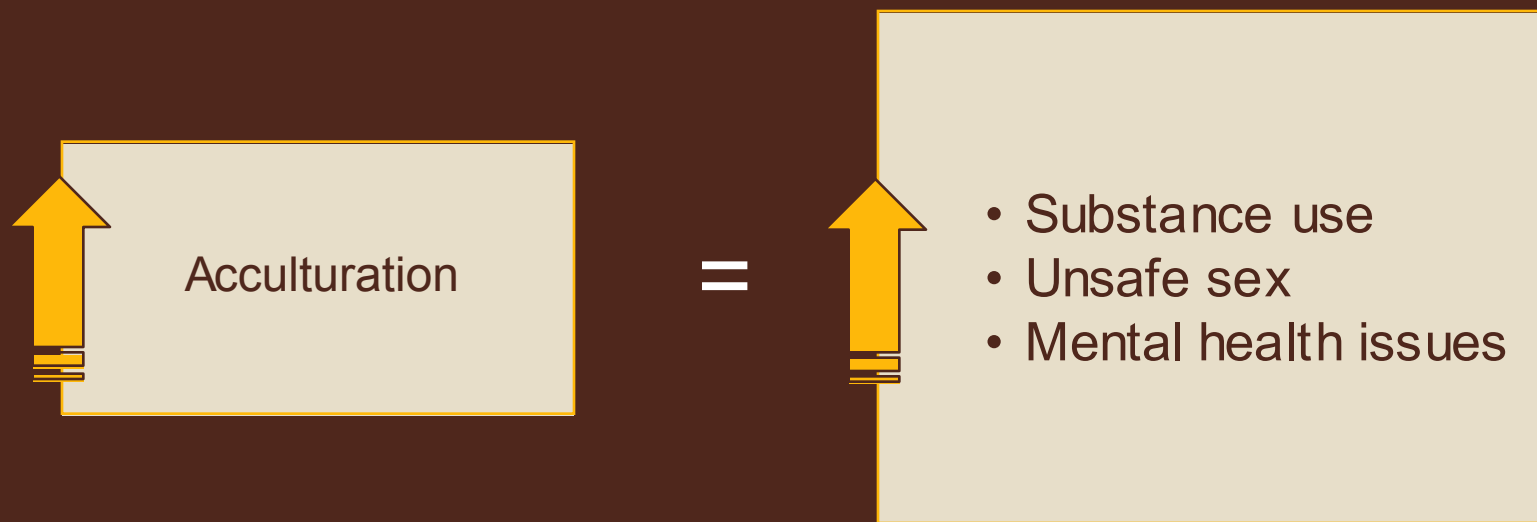
- You would think that higher levels of acculturation would be beneficial with regard to the contextual factors discussed earlier...





# Acculturation Paradox

- Studies demonstrate that acculturation leads to increased substance use, unsafe sex and mental health issues.



# Acculturation and Gender

- Question of what happens with gender norms as acculturation increases
  - Are highly acculturated Latinos more or less likely to endorse traditional gender roles where women are passive and men active in sexual situations
    - Important for sexual health of women
    - Issues of violence and domination
  - Bring up interesting questions with regard to what the dominant “culture” of gender is in the US
    - Mirror of gender culture...
  - Immigration closely related to acculturation, one of the ways acculturation is measured is through number of years in the US.

# Adolescent Latinos – study

- Secondary analysis of data collected as part of R01 (NICHD) *Television Consumption and Adolescent Sexual Activity* (PI, Deborah L. Tolman)
  - In 2001, 847 adolescents (454 women, 393 men) were recruited for a study on television consumption and gender
  - Grades 8 to 10
  - Recruited from two suburban school districts in Northeast
  - Participants self-identified as:
    - White (64%)
    - Latino (21%)
    - Black (4%)
    - Asian (4%)
    - Bi- or multi-racial (9%)

# Research Questions

- How do Latino adolescents compare to non-Latino adolescents with regard to sexual health?
  - What are attitudes toward gender roles?
- Among Latinos:
  - Does immigration help explain differences?
  - Does acculturation help explain differences?

# Latino Participants

- N = 178
- 53% (n = 95) are women, 47% (n = 83) are men
- 48% (n = 85) were not born in the US (Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic, and some in Brazil)
- 67% report Spanish as first language
- 33% (n=59) have had Intercourse
  
- Analysis
  - T-test (chi-square) comparing two groups (Latino and non-Latino)
  - Followed by linear (logistic) regression to examine immigration and acculturation
  - Descriptive information

# Comparing Latinos to non-Latinos Sexual behaviors and AIDS fears

	Latino	non-Latino	p-value
<b>Sexual Behaviors</b>			
Wanted to try PV sex	1.09	1.33	NS
Has had PV sex (%)	33	19	<.001
Frequency of protection use	2.26	2.69	.001
Frequency of condom use	2.34	2.60	.072
Number of sexual partners	2.09	1.34	.001
Age at first intercourse	13.39	14.04	.016
Age of partner at first intercourse	15.59	15.41	NS
Age of current partner	16.47	15.37	<.001
<b>Fear of AIDS</b>			
Feel scared of AIDS	3.30	3.04	.026
Afraid of getting AIDS	3.95	3.34	<.001

# Comparing Latina girls to non-Latina girls

	Latina	non-Latina	p-value
<b>Sexual Behaviors</b>			
Wanted to try PV sex	.86	1.02	NS
Has had PV sex (%)	31	19	.01
Frequency of protection use	2.16	2.63	.013
Frequency of condom use	2.19	2.55	.076
Number of sexual partners	1.61	1.36	NS
Age at first intercourse	14.17	14.21	NS
Age of partner at first intercourse	17.90	16.27	.005
Age of current partner	17.40	15.88	<.001
<b>Fear of AIDS</b>			
Feel scared of AIDS	3.35	3.11	NS
Afraid of getting AIDS	3.99	3.41	.001

# Comparing Latino boys to non-Latino boys

	Latino	non-Latino	p-value
<b>Sexual Behaviors</b>			
Wanted to try PV sex	1.36	1.65	NS
Has had PV sex (%)	36	20	.001
Frequency of protection use	2.37	2.77	.018
Frequency of condom use	2.50	2.65	NS
Number of sexual partners	2.51	1.31	<.001
Age at first intercourse	12.64	13.83	.008
Age of partner at first intercourse	13.35	14.47	.012
Age of current partner	14.74	14.59	NS
<b>Fear of AIDS</b>			
Feel scared of AIDS	3.24	2.95	.096
Afraid of getting AIDS	3.91	3.26	.001



# Immigration

- Regression analysis among Latinos immigrants and non-immigrants
  - 1 = immigrant

	$\beta$ All	$\beta$ Girls	$\beta$ Boys
Has had PV sex (OR)	1.74	1.64	1.94
Frequency of protection use	.19	-.27	1.50
Frequency of condom use	-.03	-.55	1.50
Number of sexual partners	-.19	.11	.75
Age at first intercourse	-.47	-.48	-.50
Age of partner at first intercourse	.50	.25	1.00
Age of current partner	2.00†	2.07†	.50

†  $p = < .10$

# Acculturation

- Language preference measure (5 questions – i.e. “In what language do you usually think?”)
- high vs. low, 1 = higher acculturation, 75% have low acculturation
- Regression analysis among Latinos only

	$\beta$ All	$\beta$ Girls	$\beta$ Boys
Has had PV sex (OR)	.87	2.23 †	.23*
Frequency of protection use	-.43	-.28	-1.20
Frequency of condom use	-.29	-.06	-1.20
Number of sexual partners	.64	.06	4.20*
Age at first intercourse	-.36	-.11	-1.60
Age of partner at first intercourse	1.64	1.44	-1.60
Age of current partner	-.37.	-1.06	-1.40

†  $p = < .10$       \*  $p = < .05$

# Gender–Masculinity Ideology

- 12-item scale,  $\alpha = .70$
- 4 point Likert-type scale – higher more endorsement of girls' internalization of traditional conventions of masculinity
  - “It’s embarrassing for a guy when he needs to ask for help.”

	Mean	p-value
Latina girls	2.11	.007
Non-Latina girls	1.97	

# Gender– Coercion Endorsement

- 13-item scale,  $\alpha = .82$
- 4 point Likert-type scale – higher more endorsement of verbal and physical force in dating and sexual situations
  - “A guy can’t be held responsible for things he says or does when he is really angry.”

	Mean	p-value
All Latinos	2.22	<.001
All non-Latinos	1.99	
Latina girls	2.18	<.001
Non-Latina girls	1.87	
Latino boys	2.24	.001
Non-Latino boys	2.03	

# Acknowledgments

- NICHD supplemental award for secondary analysis of *Television Consumption and Adolescent Sexual Activity* (R01 HD 38393-01 A1; Deborah L. Tolman P.I.)