

# Variations of Risk and Resilience for Mental Illness among Mexican American Parents

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# The Family Project/Proyecto la Familia

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# Background

## Problem

Children of parents with mental disorders are at increased risk for developing mental illness (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Cummings, Davies, & Campbell, 2000; Downey & Coyne, 1990; Murray et al., 1996; Weissman et al, 1997)

It is important to identify risk factors for mental illness in parents because prevention/treatment of parental mental disorders may help to prevent mental illnesses in offspring

# Background

## Population

Hispanics are the largest & fastest growing ethnic minority in the U.S.

Mexican Americans (MAs) comprise 66% of the Hispanic population

## Risks

- High rates of mental disorders have been found among MA children and adults

# Aims

Examine rates of clinically significant depressive symptomatology, “depression,” among MA mothers and fathers

Rather than compare MA rates to other racial ethnic groups, conduct within group analyses that permit the identification of potentially unique ways that risk/protective factors may operate in this group

Despite the fact that MAs are the largest Latino subgroup, and that mental health problems are prevalent among this group, little is known about risk and protective factors for depression within this group or among parents within this group

# Methods

Random & purposive sampling of 47 public, religious, and charter schools throughout Phoenix metro area

In-home CAPI interviews with 750 families (73% of eligible families)

- Participation of mother and child required
- Participation of father optional

Approximately 2-hour battery, available in Spanish or English

Families paid \$45 for each participating member

Participants were students in 5th grade and their families who were selected from school rosters in areas that served ethnically and linguistically diverse communities

# Data & Analyses

727 mothers and 458 fathers included in the current analyses

Analyses conducted separately by nativity of respondent, and together with nativity as a moderator

CES-D was used to assess depressive symptomatology: Scores  $\geq 16$  were coded as “cases of depression”

Logistic regression used to model the association between individual, contextual, and socioeconomic predictors and (a) mother and (b) father depression

Data for this study  
come from the first wave of  
an ongoing longitudinal  
studying investigating the  
role of culture and context in  
the lives of 750 MA families

# Data & Analyses: Predictors

## Individual Characteristics

- Age
- Language spoken

## Contextual

- Number of parents in the household (moms only)
- Household crowding
- Experiences with discrimination

## Socioeconomic

- Income
- Educational attainment

I chose individual, contextual and socioeconomic predictors that are easily assessed in community-based, public mental health settings



# Mother Results: Rates of Mental Disorder and Descriptives

	U.S.-Born (n=192)	Mexico-Born (n=535)
	%	%
Depression*	32.3%	50.5%
Single-parent household*	40.6%	18.1%
Mother interview in English*	92.2%	9.0%
	mean ( <i>SD</i> )	mean ( <i>SD</i> )
Age (years)	35.7 (6.2)	35.9 (5.7)
Household crowding	5.3 (1.9)	5.5 (1.9)
Experience w/ Discrimination	2.3 (0.7)	2.3 (0.7)
Income (in \$5,000)*	9.6 (5.4)	5.7 (3.5)
Highest level of Education*	12.5 (2.6)	9.7 (3.7)

$p < 0.001$

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# Mother Results: Logistic Regression

		U.S.-Born	Mexico-Born	Full Sample
		OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	
Individual:	Age	0.96 (0.91, 1.02)	0.98 (0.96, 1.02)	n.s.
	English vs. Spanish	0.43 (0.11, 1.67)	1.07 (0.55, 2.06)	n.s.
Contextual:	1- vs. 2-parent	1.79 (0.87, 3.70)	1.39 (0.85, 2.27)	n.s.
	Household crowding	1.06 (0.89, 1.26)	1.12 (1.01, 1.23)	n.s.
	Discrimination	1.63 (1.01, 2.64)	1.71 (1.33, 2.21)	n.s.
Socioeconomic:	Income	0.97 (0.90, 1.05)	0.92 (0.86, 0.97)	n.s.
	Education	0.94 (0.82, 1.09)	0.96 (0.91, 1.01)	n.s.
		$\chi^2(7)=19.55^*$	$\chi^2(7)=41.43^*$	$\chi^2(11)=76.02^*$

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# Father Results: Rates of Mental Disorder and Descriptives

	U.S.-Born (n=91)	Mexico-Born (n=367)
	%	%
Depression*	15.4%	28.6%
Father interview in English*	95.6%	5.2%
	mean ( <i>SD</i> )	mean ( <i>SD</i> )
Age (years)	37.7 (6.1)	38.1 (6.2)
Household crowding	5.4 (1.6)	5.6 (1.9)
Experience w/ Discrimination	2.2 (0.7)	2.2 (0.7)
Income (in \$5,000)*	12.5 (5.4)	6.5 (3.5)
Highest level of Education*	12.6 (2.3)	9.4 (4.0)

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# Father Results: Logistic Regression

	U.S.-Born	Mexico-Born	Full Sample
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	
<b>Individual:</b> Age (years)	1.10 (0.99, 1.22)	0.96 (0.92, 0.99)	$p < .05$
Spanish vs. English	1.61 (0.09, 27.91)	1.08 (0.26, 4.47)	n.s.
<b>Contextual:</b> Hhld Crwdng	0.64 (0.36, 1.13)	0.87 (0.75, 0.99)	n.s.
Discrimination	2.11 (0.83, 5.38)	1.52 (1.07, 2.16)	n.s.
<b>Socioeconomic:</b> Income	0.76 (0.64, 0.92)	0.91 (0.84, 0.99)	n.s.
Education	0.83 (0.61, 1.16)	0.90 (0.84, 0.96)	n.s.
Test of Global Null Hypothesis	$\chi^2(6)=22.60^*$	$\chi^2(6)=28.73^*$	$\chi^2(13)=58.55^*$

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Education	0.83 (0.61, 1.16)	0.90 (0.84, 0.96)	n.s.
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# Discussion: Rates of Depression among Mothers and Fathers

Mexico-born mothers and fathers had higher rates of depression than U.S.-born mothers and fathers.

- Grant et al. (2004): U.S.-born MA have greater than twice the odds of having any mental disorder compared to Mexico-born MA, controlling for sociodemographic differences
- Escobar et al. (2000): “Mexico-born immigrants, despite significant socioeconomic disadvantages, have better mental health profiles than do U.S.-born Mexican Americans” (p. 64)

## Discussion: Risk/Protective Factors

Mothers and fathers who experience discrimination have higher odds of having depression

- Consistent with prior work
  - Bhui et al. (2005), Diaz et al. (2001), Fincham et al. (2000), Gee (2002), Kessler et al. (1999), Williams et al. (2003)
- Public health programs and/or policies designed to effectively combat discrimination against MA are likely to be socially responsible and successful prevention efforts

# Discussion

Increases in income were associated with decreased odds of having depression for Mexico-born mothers and fathers, and for U.S.-born fathers. Education operated similarly, but only for Mexico-born fathers

- Generally, SES is considered protective for mental disorders
  - Bromberger et al. (2004); Dearing et al. (2004)
- It is likely that decreases in income and education are associated with increases in financial hardships, which in turn, increase levels of stress and depressive symptomatology

# Discussion

Increases in Household crowding were a risk factor for Mexico-born mothers, but operated as a protective factor for Mexico-born fathers.

- Prior work has conceptualized household crowding as a stressor associated with increases in mental disorders (Lepore et al., 1991)
- Rubuck & Pandey (1996) found gender differences in responses to household crowding among men and women in India
- More work needed to determine if ORs shown here are different for fathers and mothers