

Social Justice in Health for Children of Latino Day Laborers

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Day Laborers



Latino Day Laborer Families in the U.S.

- Migration of Latinos from Central America and Mexico to the US is endemic and subject to controversy.
- Primary reason for migration is economics.
- Many seek work as “jornaleros”, that is day laborers.
- An estimated 30% of day laborers include families with children.

Background – Day Laborers

- A national study of day laborers indicated approximately 117,000 day laborers seek work each day and this number is increasing.
(Valenzuela, Theodore, Melendez, & Gonzalez, 2006).
- Factors of increased risk of injury and illness, and significant insecurity regarding finances are evident among day laborers.
(Walter, Burgoise, Linaz & Shillinger, 2002)
- Day laborers may be reluctant to access health services because of communication difficulties, economic pressure and anxiety regarding immigration.
(Walters et al, 2002)

Health Disparities for Latino Children

- 1 of every 4 uninsured children is Latino.
- Latino children are 3 times more likely to be uninsured than other children.
- Latino children are more likely to lack a regular health provider than other children.
- Latino children are more likely to suffer from illnesses related to malnutrition, including anemia, diarrhea, colitis and overweight.

Cite: Migration and Health, Health of the Americas, University of California & CONAPO, 2009, Flores et al 2002, Scott et al, 2004)

Perceptions of Latino Day Laborer Parents regarding the Health of their Children

1. What are the concerns of day laborer Latino parents regarding the health of their children?
2. What are the perceptions of day laborer Latino parents of barriers and assets to health for their children?
3. What strategies do day laborer Latino parents identify to promote the health of their children?

Research Design

- Community Based Participatory Action Research
- Setting: Urban Latino Community in Northern California in the US
- Sample: 24 Latino Day Laborer Parents, 6 community stakeholders (N=30)
- Method: Phase 1-Focus groups and interviews
Phase 2 – Action
Phase 3 - Evaluation

Participatory Action Research

- Philosophy of research rooted in Lewin's action research and Freire's conscientization.
- Shared ownership of research project
- Community-based analyses of *social* problems with commitment to local action
- Commitment to enlarging the role and representation of marginalized communities

Findings:

The unique experience of Latino day laborer families includes multiple layers of uncertainty and stress.

- Uncertainty of work
- Economic uncertainty
- Vulnerability related to work conditions
- Uncertainty related to immigration status
- Families culturally and physically isolated
- Difficulty getting health care
- Perception of poor care

Experience of Cultural Dissonance

- Expectations of
 - Support from extended family
 - Trust – “confianza” or “fe”
 - Warm personal relationships – “personalismo”
 - “Being known” by the health care provider
- Experience of
 - Isolation, fear, disrespect, marginalization
 - Difficulty accessing the health care system
 - Acculturation paradox
 - Chronic uncertainty

Parents said:

“If my baby has a fever or flu or whatever, I don't take her to the hospital because it makes me afraid.”

“Fear is also a factor which keeps us as mothers in the house because at least for me, I am afraid to leave.”

“Our children are growing up like second class citizens because we can not give them security.”



Parents said:

“I have 3 children; only 1 qualifies for insurance”

“You take your baby to emergency and they don't say any thing, and you wait for hours. The service they give is not very good.”

“ The doctor should know your child ”



Threats to Social Justice for the health of children of Latino Day Laborers

Health system issues

- ❖ Variable, inconsistent access to health care
- ❖ Minimal provision in health reform
- ❖ Uneven care, perception of poor care
- ❖ Particularly low access to specialty care, mental health, dental care etc.



Threats to Social Justice

Cultural Issues

- ❖ Provider inconsistency, bias
- ❖ Cultural Dissonance
- ❖ Perception of provider disrespect
- ❖ Mutual lack of trust
- ❖ Fear and marginalization
- ❖ Limited voice
- ❖ Economic uncertainty



Strategies for Social Justice in health for children of Latino Day Laborers

- Equitable Health delivery systems
- Medical Homes
- Cultural advocacy
- Health Navigators
- Peer to Peer Models for Health Support
- Migrant Civic Organization “Day Laborer Centers”




Social Justice for Latino children

- Social Justice for Latino children includes working with clients and their families to ascertain fair and equal treatment and access to opportunities and resources in the community.
- “It is especially important to demonstrate the courage to challenge **unhealthy, unfair, and unjust situations** that lead to human rights violations and adversely affect immigrants’ mental health.” Chung, 2008

Social Justice

- “Unique skills and sensitivity are necessary to effectively address the **deeply rooted trauma and loss associated with migration, the complexity of immigrant clients’ past and present stressors, the acculturation process, psychosocial issues in adaptation, and cultural influences that affect immigrant clients’ constructions of psychological illness and mental health care strategies**”
Chung et al 2008

Social Justice Upstream

- “Since social policies—not laws of human nature or economic development—are responsible for the social and economic inequalities that produce these health effects, we are forced to look upstream from the point of medical delivery and ask about the fairness of the distribution of these goods.”

Daniels, 2001

Social Justice: Community Based Participatory Research

“CBPR frequently involves thorny ethical challenges for outside researchers and their community partners. Yet despite such challenges and obstacles, CBPR provides an approach to research that shows increasing promise as we attempt to address many of today’s most intractable health and social problems.”

Minkler, 2004, p. 694.

Action

Research is ongoing with community based action strategies of community support such as:

- Parenting education
- Parent to parent support group/mentoring
- Development of community resource center
- Anticipated Training of peer health navigators



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