

Biobehavioral Study examining the effects of Latinx Parent-Youth's Discrimination on Health

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Short Description: This is a multi-method study examining the biobehavioral effects of institutional and interpersonal forms of discrimination among Latinx parent-youth dyads in Western Massachusetts. The goals of this study to determine the acceptability and feasibility of conducting a biobehavioral study that collects survey, anthropometric and salivary analyte data from Latinx parents and youth (ages 13-19) as well as examine the reliability, validity and applicability of diverse discrimination measures in both Latinx parents and youth. Thus far, we have data from 37 families. We are seeking external funding to examine the effects of interpersonal emotion dynamics in discussions about racism in parent-youth stress physiology and internalizing symptoms. We are also seeking funding to examine if structural racism from educational opportunity and local and state housing policies are related to stress physiology and cardiometabolic outcomes in Latinx parent-youth dyads.

Motivations for the work:

1. **Medical Sociology:** There is a dearth of research on the effects of racism on Latinx health despite them being the second largest ethno-racial group in the United States, with an extensive history of social isolation, exclusion, and marginalization. Moreover, the few population-based studies that exist to examine racism and health are inconclusive, possibly because these studies do not approach the Latinx population as mixed race, assume that family members identify with the same racial identity, and that Latinx persons experience racism equally without taking into consideration phenotype, accent, and social context.
2. **Public Health:** Despite the Hispanic/Latinx population having longer life expectancies than the non-Hispanic White population, we have a conscious interest to examine mental health outcomes and cardiometabolic risk as these are some of the greatest health challenges experienced in our community.

3. **Biobehavioural Development:** Despite adolescence being a formative and stressful period for both parents and youth, we have little research on biological synchrony between parents and adolescent children.
4. **Family & Child Dynamics:** We do not know how the convergence or divergence of experiences of discrimination between Hispanic/Latinx parents and youth form self-perceived and performed ethnic-racial identity, which plays out into religious and spiritual practices, consumer practices, political and social affiliations.

Presentations:

Preliminary Results from the Latinx parent-youth study have been presented at the following national and international conferences:

1. Mercado, E.M., Martínez, A.D., Barbieri, M. “Latinx Parent-Youth Experiences of Discrimination: Dyadic associations between self-reported discrimination and biobehavioral health.” *Society for Research in Child Development Annual Meeting, Salt Lake City, UT. March 25, 2023. Oral presentation.*
2. Martínez, A.D., Mercado, E., Barbieri, M., Fernández, P. *Community-engaged and community-based participatory research in diverse Latinx communities in the United States: Recommendations from the field.*” *Stress, Trauma and Resilience (STAR) research lecture series at Brown University/The Miriam Hospital. Providence, RI. November 18, 2022. Oral presentation.*
3. Martínez, A.D., Mercado, E., Barbieri, M., Fernández, P. “Capturing race, ethnicity, and racism in public health research with Latinx adults and youth in Western Massachusetts.” *American Public Health Association 150th Annual Meeting, Honoring the Work and Legacy of Edna Viruell-Fuentes, Boston, MA. November 8, 2022. Oral presentation.*

Publications:

Martínez, A.D., Mercado, E., Barbieri, M., Kim, S. Y., Granger, D.A. (2022). *The importance of biobehavioral research to examine the physiological effects of ethnic and racial discrimination in the Latinx population. Frontiers in Public Health, 2064.*

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