Depression among Mexican Immigrant Mothers: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER - ANAYELI LOPEZ, MSW, PHD
ANN ATENCIO, MA
OMHAGAIN DAYEEN, MA

58% (i.e. **6.5 million**) undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are from **Mexico** (Pew Hispanic Center, 2017).
Background

**Stressors faced by immigrants**: learning a new language, adapting to a new cultural, family separation, discrimination, marginalization (Cavazos-Regh, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007).

**Undocumented immigrants can experience added psychological distress**: trauma, lack of legal protections, constant fear of being deported, limited resources (Arbona et al., 2010, Sullivan & Rehm, 2005, Díaz-Lázaro, Verdinelli, & Cohen, 2012).
Background

• **Self-efficacy beliefs:**
  • Individual beliefs in his or her ability to influence the conditions in their lives or complete a task (Bandura, 1995).
  • High self-efficacy beliefs helps cope with stressful life events more effectively (Hartely, Vance, Elliott, Cuckler, & Berry, 2008).
  • Low self-efficacy predicts depression since individuals perceive situations beyond their control (Linde et al., 2004)

• **Collective Efficacy**
  • Collective efficacy is associated with lower levels of individual depression (Ahern & Galea, 2011; Mair et al., 2009).
  • Cohesive neighborhoods can provide more social support to residents (Cutrona, Wallace, & Wesner, 2006).
Significance of the Study

• Parents undocumented status affects children’s development and well-being: increased family stress, fear of deportation, reduced income, poor working conditions, dilapidated housing, and poor access to social services and community supports (Yoshikawa & Kalil, 2011; Yoshikawa, Suarez-Orozco, & Gonzales, 2016).

• Limited number of quantitative studies on this topic

• Use of ecological- and family-based approaches

• Aligns with social work professional values

• More relevant than ever before
Theoretical Framework

• **Stages of migration framework:** multiple factors influence the experience of immigrants during different stages of migration (Pine & Drachman, 2005).

• Multiple **cumulative stresses** could influence the mental health of undocumented immigrants.
Theoretical Framework

• **Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model**: Bidirectional influences between individuals’ development and their surrounding environmental contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

• **The social-ecological environments** of children growing up in unauthorized homes influences their development (Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suarez-Orozco, 2015).
Data and Sample

- Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A. FANS)
- Cross-sectional data from Wave 1
- The sample:
  - Mexican origin mothers and their children: Native-born, documented, mixed-status, undocumented
## Research Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H1a:</strong> Undocumented Status $\rightarrow$ + Maternal depression (Direct Effect)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>H1b:</strong> Undocumented Status $\rightarrow$ - Mother’s self-efficacy $\rightarrow$ + Maternal depression (Indirect Effect)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>H2a:</strong> Documented Status $\rightarrow$ - Maternal depression (Direct Effect)</td>
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<td><strong>H2b:</strong> Documented Status $\rightarrow$ + Mother’s self-efficacy $\rightarrow$ - Maternal depression (Indirect Effect)</td>
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<td><strong>H3:</strong> Collective efficacy $\rightarrow$ + Mother’s self-efficacy $\rightarrow$ - Maternal depression (Indirect Effect)</td>
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Measures

• **Dependent Variable**

  • **Maternal depression:**
    - Composite-International Diagnostic Interview-Short Form (CIDI-SF)
    - Questions related to dysphoric mood (i.e., sadness or anxiety) and amhedonia (i.e., inability to experience joy).
    - Scores of 0.55 or greater were classified as high probability of having major depression
    - To meet classification—symptoms lasted two weeks for most of the day.
    - 0 = not depressed (less than .55); 1 = depressed (.55 or greater)
    - Cronbach reliability score .87
Measures

• **Independent Variables**

  ◦ **Immigration status:**
  ◦ **Maternal Depression:** 1 = native born, 2 = documented immigrant (naturalized citizens or green card holder), and 3 = undocumented immigrant
Measures

• **Independent Variables**

• **Collective Efficacy:**
  ◦ Three subscales:
    ◦ Intergenerational closure: “parents in the neighborhood know their children’s friend,”
    ◦ Social cohesion: “This is a close-knit neighborhood”
    ◦ Informal social control: “neighbors would scold a child who was showing disrespect to an adult.”
  ◦ 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
• The Cronbach’s alpha reliability score was .86
Analytic Strategy

• Data screening
• Correlations
• Descriptive statistics
• Path analysis
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers/Household Demographic Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother’s immigration status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. born</td>
<td>20.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documented</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>37.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>8.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–9 years</td>
<td>15.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–19 years</td>
<td>39.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years or more</td>
<td>36.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>31.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>68.14%</td>
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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Mothers/Household \((n = 578)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>61.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitating</td>
<td>12.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>26.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational attainment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>62.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>18.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or more</td>
<td>18.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family poverty level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% FPL or below</td>
<td>31.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101–200% FPL</td>
<td>13.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201–400% FPL</td>
<td>6.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401% FPL and above</td>
<td>48.27%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Path diagram for the mediation model (n = 578).

Note. $\chi^2 = 0.53$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$; CFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.020. $df =$ degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
Results & Discussion

• H1: Undocumented mothers had fewer symptoms of depression compared to documented U.S. born Mexican American mothers.
  • Consistent with immigrant health paradox (Alegría et al., 2007a).
  • Not consistent with stages of migration (Pine & Drachman, 2005).

• H1a: Undocumented mothers had lower levels of self-efficacy beliefs, which predicted symptoms of depression.
  • Undocumented immigrants may have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy due to sense of helplessness (Samaniego-Estrada, 2014; Arbona et al., 2010).
  • High self-efficacy has been linked with lower levels of depression and anxiety (Maddux & Gosselin, 2003).
  • Helps to individuals feel that they have control over their lives. (Linde et al., 2004; Maciejewski, Prigerson, & Mazure, 2000).
Results & Discussion

• **H2**: Not significant for documented immigrants

• **H3**: Collective efficacy increased self-efficacy
  • Neighborhood processes influence individuals’ perceptions of themselves and consequently, their emotional state (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009).
Policy Implications

• At the state levels, some state policies allow undocumented immigrants to access health insurance, obtain a driver’s license, allow undocumented students to compete for financial aid, and protect undocumented workers from employer retaliation (Yoshikawa, Suarez-Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2016).

• In the long-term, comprehensive immigration reform; the harm brought about by unauthorized status including fear of deportation, associated stigma, and blocked opportunities could potentially be decreased.
Practice Implications

• *Promotora programs* inform immigrants about their rights and raising awareness of available resources Hilfinger Messias, Sharpe, Castillo-Gonzalez, Trevino, & Parra-Medina, 2016).

• Increasing self-efficacy and collective efficacy by engaging immigrant women in political advocacy (Gates, 2017).

• Strengthening Families Program, has been found to improve family relationships, improve parenting skills, and reduce problems behaviors among families facing adversities (Orte, Ballester, March, & Amer, 2013).
Limitations

• Cross-sectional data

• Representative of the population of Los Angeles County only

• Data collected between 2001-2004

• Naturalized U.S. citizens were lumped together with permanent residents to create a category called “documented immigrants”.

• Data does not include variables that could measure cultural protective factors, acculturation, acculturative stress, and trauma
Thank you!!!
Selected References

Selected References


