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## **THE PATH FROM FEAR OF DEPORTATION TO IMMIGRANT LATINO YOUTH ATOD USE, ANXIETY, AND COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION**

### Background

Nearly 75% of Latino immigrant youth report living in constant fear of either being deported or having someone they know deported. This leads to elevated levels of chronic stress among adolescents and to reports of higher levels of anxiety, cognitive dysfunction, and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use. Still, few studies have examined whether the negative impacts of fear of deportation (FoD) are mediated by stress and if modifiable factors such as hope moderate this relationship among Latino immigrant youth. Due to accelerated growth among this, demographic coupled with current immigration policy, it is vital to the reduction of health disparities to better understand the mechanisms that affect the impact of FoD on mental health.

### Methods

This moderated mediation study tests: (a) the impact of FoD on three measures of Latino immigrant youth, anxiety, cognitive dysfunction, and ATOD use (use vs. no use); (b) whether stress mediates the paths from FoD to the three outcomes; and (c) whether cognitive hope (as defined to include goals, pathways, and agency by Snyder, 2003) moderates these pathways. The sample consists of 1st and 2nd generation 7th grade Latino immigrant youth (N=136) residing in the U.S., of whom 50% were male, 67% were born in U.S., and 26% took the survey in Spanish.

### Results

FoD was significantly associated with anxiety ( $r=.14$ ), cognitive dysfunction ( $r=.25$ ), and ATOD use ( $r=.16$ ). Stress significantly mediated the paths from FoD to anxiety (.04; partially), cognitive dysfunction (.19; fully), and ATOD use (OR=1.10; fully). Hope moderated the FoD to stress pathway in all three models ( $B=-.27$ ) such that a one SD increase in hope offset the effect of FoD on stress. Hope significantly moderated the stress to ATOD use pathway, but not the stress to anxiety or cognitive dysfunction paths.

### Conclusion

Stress as a mechanism to explain the effects of FoD on mental health varies by outcome. Hope seems to avert the onset of stress but its effect on the stress to outcome pathway varies by outcome. Hope as an important buffer against the effects of FoD is promising and if replicated could be incorporated into prevention interventions for immigrant populations. Likewise, hope as a moderator of the stress to ATOD use pathway has important implications for prevention strategies.