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HIV TESTING AMONG LATINO EMERGING ADULTS: EXAMINING ASSOCIATIONS WITH FAMILISM SUPPORT, NATIVITY, AND GENDER

BACKGROUND: Latino emerging adults in the United States are disproportionately affected by HIV and have a low prevalence of HIV testing. Thus, it is important to examine factors associated with HIV testing in this population. Familism support, a cultural value that reflects the perception of the family as a main source of social support, may influence HIV testing behaviors among Latinos. As such, this study aims to examine the association between familism support and lifetime history of HIV testing, and whether nativity status and gender moderates this association among Latino emerging adults.

METHODS: Cross-sectional data from 157 Latino emerging adults aged 18 to 25 years living in Arizona and Florida were collected using an online survey. Poisson regression with robust estimates of variance was used to estimate adjusted prevalence ratio (aPR) and 95% confidence interval (CI) for the association between familism support and lifetime history of HIV testing. Interaction terms (familism support x nativity status and familism support x gender) were tested and stratified models were fitted for subgroups of significant interactions. All analyses were adjusted for sociodemographic variables, HIV stigma and sexual risk behaviors.

RESULTS: Findings indicated that 59.9% of participants reported a lifetime history of HIV testing. Higher levels of familism support were associated with a decreased prevalence of lifetime history of HIV testing (aPR=0.81, 95% CI: 0.68-0.95). Nativity status moderated the association between familism support and lifetime history of HIV testing, with the negative association, only found among immigrants (aPR=0.46, 95% CI: 0.28-0.74). Gender did not moderate the association.

CONCLUSION: Familism support is associated with HIV testing behaviors among Latino emerging adult immigrants. Efforts to increase uptake of HIV testing in this population may benefit from promoting family support to getting tested for HIV but a better understanding of the context in which family support may enable HIV testing is needed.