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Pre to Post-Immigration Cigarette Smoking Among Recent Latinx Immigrants

BACKGROUND: Research on cigarette smoking is sparse among Latinx, a fast-growing population in the U.S. Specifically, there is a dearth of information on the prevalence, patterns of use, and sociodemographic characteristics associated with cigarette smoking among recent Latinx immigrants. The aims of this study were: 1) to describe the prevalence and patterns of cigarette smoking among recent (within a year of arrival) young Latinx immigrants, and 2) to understand the characteristics of immigrants who changed patterns of cigarette smoking from pre- to post-immigration, such as quitting or relapsing after arrival to the country.

METHODS: This cross-sectorial study used baseline data from an on-going longitudinal study that follows a cohort of 550 young adult recent Latinx immigrants to Miami/Dade Co., FL. Participants in the study were 18-34 years old, who recently immigrated to the U.S. from a Latin American Country with the intention of staying in the US at least 3 years beyond the baseline assessment. Respondent-driven sampling was the primary recruitment strategy. Bivariate (chi square) analyses and regressions were applied.

RESULTS: About half (50.9%) of the recent immigrants had never smoked a cigarette (62.5% female and 39.2% male); 24.0% were past smokers who had not smoked since arrival to the U.S. (20.9% female and 27.1% male); 17.3% were someday smokers (SDs) in the past month (12.6% female and 22.0% male), and 7.8% were everyday smokers (EDs) in the past month (4.0% female and 11.7% male). In a logistic regression predicting post-immigration SDs or EDs, males compared to females (AOR=2.56; 95%CI=1.63-4.02) and those with high school education or less compared with bachelors or higher education (AOR=2.20, 95%CI=1.25-3.87) had a higher likelihood of being SDs or EDs after controlling for other sociodemographic characteristics. Interestingly, 14.8% of past smokers reported quitting, while 5.9% indicated relapsed smoking after immigration. Results from logistic regressions showed that after adjusting for other cofactors, those with monthly income of less than \$1000 had an increased likelihood of quitting cigarette smoking after arrival (AOR=3.36. 95%CI= 1.13-10.02).

CONCLUSION: Recent Latinx immigrants to Miami/Dade Co. tend to follow the smoking patterns they had in their country of origin. However, low income smokers are more likely to cease smoking after arrival. Future research needs to address the impact of smoking bans.