Title of Paper/Presentation: Is Familism a Protective Factor Against Antisocial Behaviors?

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(a) Background: “Familism”, defined as a “strong identification and attachment of individuals with their families (nuclear and extended)”, is considered as one of the central core values of Hispanic culture. [1]. Among Mexican Americans, it acted as a protective factor against substance abuse and buffered the effect of acculturative stress on alcohol consumption in Hispanics. [2]. Initial evidence suggests there is a link between familism and externalizing behaviors [3,4]. Our objective is to examine the relationship between both youth and parental familism with presence of youth antisocial behaviors over time among Puerto Rican youth living in two different settings.

(b) Method: Sample: Puerto Rican children aged 5-13 years at baseline residing in the South Bronx in N.Y. City (n=1138) and in the Standard Metropolitan Area in San Juan and Caguas, Puerto Rico (n=1353).

Measures: Familism levels were assessed using an adaptation of Sabogal’s Familism Scale. Level of past year antisocial behaviors was measured by an index (ASBI). Data Analysis: The association between familism and ASB trends over three waves was examined through mixed linear models (MIXED procedure, SAS) stratified by age and gender, adjusted by site (South Bronx or San Juan) and propensity scores reflecting site differences.

(c) Results: Parental familism is especially protective against antisocial behaviors among girls, both from the younger (ages 5-9) and older (10 and older) age groups. For boys, parental familism is only protective among 5-9 year-olds. Youth familism has a protective effect against antisocial behaviors in boys who are 10 and older, but not girls.

(d) Conclusions: Familism may be an important factor that protects against antisocial behaviors, however, its effect varies by age and gender.


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