



# Mexican Descent Adolescent Suicidality, Depression, Hopelessness, & Life Satisfaction : The Role of Gender & Caregiver Connection

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## Introduction & Background

### Latino Adolescent Suicidality

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for adolescents in the USA<sup>1</sup>.
- Latino adolescent remain a major public issue concerning their suicide attempts. Compared to non-Latino Whites and African Americans, Latino adolescent report higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts with Latina girls having higher rates than Latino boys<sup>2</sup>.
- Caregiver connectedness has been found to serve as a potential protective factor for adolescent suicide<sup>3</sup>.

### Latino Adolescent Depression:

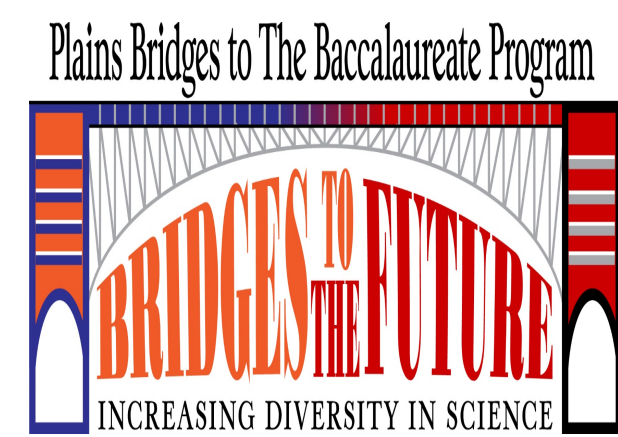
- Mexican descent Adolescent report higher levels of depression compared to youth of other ethnicities<sup>4,5</sup>.
- Being a Mexican descent girl, as opposed to being a boy, is related to higher reporting of depressive symptoms<sup>6</sup>.
- The relationship with their caregiver can have implications for Latino adolescent depressive symptoms whereby less connection is related to higher reporting of depressive symptoms<sup>7,8</sup>.

### Latino Adolescent Hopelessness

- "Hopelessness is a core characteristic of depression and serves as the link between depression and suicide<sup>9</sup>."
- Stressors are related to higher reporting of Latino adolescents hopelessness<sup>10</sup>.
- Having low caregiver connectedness could be a stressor that is related to higher levels of hopelessness<sup>10</sup>.

### Latino Adolescent Life Satisfaction:

- Life satisfaction is defined as a person's evaluation of his or her life as a whole<sup>11</sup>.
- Because Mexican descent adolescents face many challenges, it may affect their life satisfaction negatively<sup>12</sup>.
- Having a close relationship to their caregiver can result in a positive and high life satisfaction rate because the more the caregiver is involved, the more understanding of the problem/challenges his or she may have<sup>12</sup>.



## Hypotheses

### PURPOSE:

For the present study, we will investigate the relationship of caregiver-child connectedness with suicidality (ideation, plans, and attempts), depression, hopelessness, and life satisfaction for Mexican descent adolescents.

### HYPOTHESES:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Higher levels of male and female caregiver-child connection will be related to lower reporting of suicidality, hopelessness, and depressive symptoms.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Higher levels of male and female caregiver-child connection will be related to higher reporting of life satisfaction.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Being a female will place a youth at a higher risk for higher reporting of suicidality, depressive symptoms, hopelessness, and lower reporting of life satisfaction.

## Methods

### PARTICIPANTS

- 524 Mexican American Adolescents
- **Ages:** 14-20 years (M = 16.23, SD = 1.10)
- **Gender:** 46.9% boys, 53.1% girls
- **Generation:** Majority 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (40.7%)

### INSTRUMENTS

- **Male and Female Caregiver Connection** (Caregiver Connection Scale)<sup>13</sup>
- **Depressive Symptoms** (Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale-20)<sup>14</sup>
- **Hopelessness** (Hopelessness Scale for Children)<sup>15</sup>
- **Suicidality** (Three items asking about ideation, plans, and attempts in the last 12 months in yes/no response form)
- **Life Satisfaction** (Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale)<sup>16</sup>

### PROCEDURE

- Incentives given to return consent forms and to participate
- Paper-and-pencil self-report questionnaire.
- 30 minutes to complete

## Results

### Suicidal Ideation

Variable	B	SE B	Wald	OR
<b>Step 1</b>				
Gender	1.11	.24	20.83	3.02
<b>Step 2</b>				
Gender	1.18***	.25	22.28	3.25
Female Caregiver Connection	-.45***	.13	12.85	.64
Male Caregiver Connection	-.07	.08	.65	.93

### Suicide Plan

Variable	B	SE B	Wald	OR
<b>Step 1</b>				
Gender	1.13***	.32	12.32	3.09
<b>Step 2</b>				
Gender	1.19***	.33	13.15	3.28
Female Caregiver Connection	-.40**	.15	7.18	.67
Male Caregiver Connection	-.07	.10	.47	.93

### Suicide Attempt

Variable	B	SE B	Wald	OR
<b>Step 1</b>				
Gender	.92*	.38	5.82	2.51
<b>Step 2</b>				
Gender	.98*	.39	6.27	2.65
Female Caregiver Connection	-.36*	.17	4.37	.70
Male Caregiver Connection	-.17	.12	2.06	.84

### Depressive Symptoms

Variable	B	SE	β
<b>Step 1</b>			
Gender	1.98*	.93	.09
<b>Step 2</b>			
Gender	1.99*	.88	.09
Female Caregiver Connection	-3.06***	.53	-.26
Male Caregiver Connection	-.77*	.33	-.10

### Hopelessness

Variable	B	SE	β
<b>Step 1</b>			
Gender	-.37	.24	-.07
<b>Step 2</b>			
Gender	-.38	.24	-.07
Female Caregiver Connection	-.32*	.14	-.11
Male Caregiver Connection	-.20*	.09	-.10

### Life Satisfaction

Variable	B	SE	β
<b>Step 1</b>			
Gender	-.03	.09	-.01
<b>Step 2</b>			
Gender	-.03	.08	-.01
Female Caregiver Connection	.43***	.05	.37
Male Caregiver Connection	.13***	.03	.17

Note: Gender coding, 0 = Boys & 1 = Girls; \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

## Conclusion

### Caregiver Connection & Suicidality

- Higher connection with the female caregiver was related to lower probability of reporting suicidal ideation, plans and attempts (H<sub>1</sub>).

### Caregiver Connection & Other Mental Health Outcomes

- Higher levels of both male and female caregiver connection were related to lower levels of depressive symptoms, hopelessness, and higher levels of life satisfaction (H<sub>2</sub>).

### Gender Difference in Mental Health Outcomes

- Girls reported significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, plans and attempts than boys (H<sub>3</sub>).

It is concluded that male and female caregiver connectedness and gender are differentially associated with various mental health outcomes. This study has the potential to inform family interventions aimed at improving mental health outcomes and could serve to decrease disparities for Mexican decent adolescents.

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