Father-Daughter Relationships Among Latina Teens Whom Attempted Suicide: A Dyadic Analysis

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Introduction

GROWING LATINX POPULATION & SUICIDE PREVALENCE
- In the U.S. the Latinx population from ages 5-17 encompasses 23% of the Latinx population in the U.S. 1
- Given that the Latinx adolescent population is growing, it is important to be aware of the mental health disparities they face. 2
- The second leading cause of death for people in between the ages of 10-34 in the U.S. is suicide. 2
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported higher suicide attempts among females when compared to males, as well as higher suicide attempts among the Latinx population when compared to the White population. 3
- As illustrated over the past decades, Latina adolescents have been at a greater risk for suicide.

FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS
- There has been a lack of attention given to father-daughter relationships in the Latinx suicide literature. 4
- Latinx adolescents who feel closer to their male caregivers had lower levels of suicide risk. 5
- There is lower suicidal ideation among Latinas when they see their fathers as supportive. 4
- Given the literature, more research has been done regarding mother-daughter relationships, and less attention has been given to the father-daughter relationships. This current study focused on addressing this research gap.

Method

RESEARCH AIMS
- Describe father-daughter relationships among girls whom have attempted suicide.
- Describe fathers’ responses to their daughters’ suicide attempts.

PARTICIPANTS
- Latina teen daughters who have attempted suicide, and their fathers (N = 20)
- Father-daughter dyads (n = 10)

DATA COLLECTION
- In-depth, open-ended interviews in Spanish or English.
- Participants (teens and fathers) were asked questions about their relationships with family members; conflict and conflict resolution, including an example of a recent event; distribution of household responsibilities, rules, and discipline; and life outside the household, such as school activities and dating.
- Interviewers elicited a retrospective narrative of the suicide attempt from the perspective of the adolescent and her father.

DATA ANALYSIS
- Interviews audiotaped and transcribed
- Dyad approach entailed to levels of analysis: 1) Individual; and 2) Dyadic
- Individual Analysis
  o Inductive thematic approach
  o Comprehensive reading of the interviews
  o Codebook development and revisions
  o Coding and audit trail
- Dyadic Analysis
  o Composite summaries developed for each dyad
  o Analytic memos written about each dyad
  o Within and across case analysis conducted to identify major themes

Results

Dynamic Relationships
- Emotional Distance
- Physical Distance
- Emotional Closeness

Father As Protector
- Creating a Good Life
- Teenage Resistance
- Failure to Protect

Responses to Suicide Attempt
- Active Responses
- Apathetic Responses
- Contradictory Responses

Conclusions

SUMMARY
- In general, daughters tended to limit how much they discussed their relationship with their father.
- Dynamic relationships are complex and influenced by the father’s role in daughter’s life and his reaction to daughter’s suicide attempt.
- Typically Latino fathers are labeled as being unemotional and strict. 4
- Some fathers in this study demonstrated fitting into the label yet others displayed warmth and affection towards daughters.
- Fathers’ desire to protect their daughters through their behaviors were exhibited by gendered ideas.
- Fathers’ responses to daughter’s suicide attempt varied, with many not knowing how to react and demonstrated a lack of understanding.

IMPLICATIONS
- More research is needed to better understand the complex multi-faceted father-daughter relationship among Latinas who have attempted suicide.
- It is important to consider interventions for families affected by suicide, interventions may vary due to the uniqueness of each situation.

References

LATINX MENTAL HEALTH & RESILIENCE AT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

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