



The Impact of Parent Reaction to Sexual Orientation on Depressive Symptoms and Sexual Risk Behavior among Hispanic Men Who Have Sex with Men



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Background

- Coming out to parents is a significant milestone for gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) individuals.
- Disclosure and subsequent parental reactions impact health (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz & Sanchez, 2009).
- Hispanic gay men have more parental rejection, depression and suicidal behavior, and HIV risk behavior than any other racial and gender GLB groups (Ryan et al., 2009).
- Hispanic gay male experiences must be understood in the context of Hispanic cultural values and beliefs.
- Beliefs are impacted by acculturation.
- Recently migrated Hispanic men engage in high risk sexual behavior due to (Bianchi et al., 2007):
 - poverty
 - non-fluency in English
 - fear of homophobic attacks
 - isolation/loneliness
 - perceiving multiple sexual partners as normative gay behavior in the US

Study Aims:

1. Describe disclosure of sexual orientation to parents
2. Examine the links between parent’s acceptance with depressive symptoms and sexual risk behavior
3. Test whether participant acculturation interacted with these relationships

Methods

Secondary analysis from a mixed methods study

Quantitative cross-sectional design

GZLM in SPSS 19 used for all analyses

Scales used

- Perceived Parent Reaction Scale (Willoughby et al., 2006)
- Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (Marin & Gamba, 1996)
- Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977)
- Safer Sex Behavior Questionnaire (Dilorio et al., 1992)

Sample characteristics

- 125 Hispanic MSM in South Florida
 - self-identified as 97% homosexual, 1% bisexual, 2% unknown
- Country of origin: 53% Cuban, 14% U.S. born, 10% Puerto Rican, 23% other Hispanic origin groups
- Years of Education: M = 14.26 (SD = 3.20)
- Employed: 58%
- Age: 43.02 years (SD = 10.34)

Results

- Disclosure of sexual orientation: 41% of the men had disclosed to both parents, 34% to neither parent, 22% to mother only, and 3% to father only.
- No differences between disclosure groups in depressive symptoms, $p = .452$, or safer sex behaviors, $p = .713$.
- Lower maternal acceptance of sexual orientation, $p = .032$, and lower paternal acceptance, $p = .004$, were related to higher depressive symptoms in the sons.
- Lower parental acceptance was not directly related to the son’s sexual risk.
- There was a trend for a relationship between acculturation to the U.S. and lower sexual risk behavior--men who were more Americanized engaged in less risky behavior, $p=.059$.
- There was a significant interaction between acculturation and maternal acceptance--lower maternal acceptance tempered the protective effect of acculturation, $p = .037$.

Conclusions

- About one third of the men had not disclosed their sexual orientation to either of their parents, and mothers were more often disclosed to than fathers.
- Parental acceptance was important to the men’s mental health well into adulthood.
- Acculturation to the US was marginally protective for sexual risk behavior but not in the context of lower maternal acceptance.
- Family interventions that can promote parental acceptance and preserve family ties can improve the mental health of Hispanic MSM.

We acknowledge support from the Miami Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, funded by a grant (P30AI073961) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and from the Center of Excellence for Health Disparities Research: El Centro, funded by a grant (P60MD002266) from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities of the NIH.

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