

# Assessing the Impact of Family Status, Family Cohesion, and Acculturation on Youth Violence Among Immigrant Latinos

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Public Health

## ABSTRACT

**Background/Objectives:** Latino youth violence is an emerging public health concern. The objective is to assess the impact of family status, family cohesion, and acculturation on youth violence among Latino immigrants in Langley Park, MD compared with a control community in Culmore, VA.

**Methods:** Constructs were generated from survey questions to represent family support and cohesion, acculturation, and youth violence. Bivariate and multivariate regression analyses were modeled to evaluate the relationships between family support and cohesion, acculturation, and violence, after adjusting for confounders.

**Results:** After controlling for covariates, family support consistently reduced victimization (PE = -0.02, SE = 0.01, t = -2.64, p-value = 0.0085); increased non-violence attitudes and beliefs (PE = 0.32, SE = 0.05, t = 6.17, p-value < .0001); and protected against fighting (OR = 0.83, 95% CI = 0.77, 0.89), gang knowledge (OR = 0.81, 95% CI = 0.77, 0.86), and feeling unsafe (OR = 0.90, 95% CI = 0.83, 0.98). Conversely, more acculturated youth reported greater victimization (PE = 0.02, SE = 0.00, t = 3.86, p-value = 0.0001); non-violent attitudes (PE = 0.08, SE = 0.02, t = 3.20, p-value = 0.0014); fighting (OR = 1.07, 95% CI = 1.04, 1.11); gang knowledge (OR = 1.08, 95% CI = 1.05, 1.11); and feeling unsafe (OR = 1.12, 95% CI = 1.07, 1.16).

**Conclusions:** Family support is associated with reduced violence engagement and risk behaviors among Latino youth. Results will inform the development and implementation of future youth violence prevention programs among ethnic minorities and immigrants.

## BACKGROUND

- Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States
- Violence is public health concern among Latino youth
- Familism is a fundamental Latino cultural value
- Family cohesion, limited parent-child conflicts, and increased family support = less aggressive behavior
- Stepwise migration contributes to fractured family relationships
- Latino children and adolescents acculturate faster than adults
- Seguridad, Apoyo, Familia, Educacion, y Recursos (SAFER) Latinos was developed and implemented in 2006
  - Youth violence prevention intervention
  - Focuses on community-level factors
  - Targets family cohesion, school barriers, community fragmentation, and violence attitudes

## OBJECTIVES

- To assess the impact of family status, family cohesion, and acculturation on youth violence among Latino immigrants in Langley Park, MD
- Among Latino youth (12 – 17 years old), to evaluate whether:
  - Family status and cohesion are associated with reduced opportunities and involvement in youth violence
  - Acculturation may lead to family stress and opportunities for youth violence/aggressive behavior

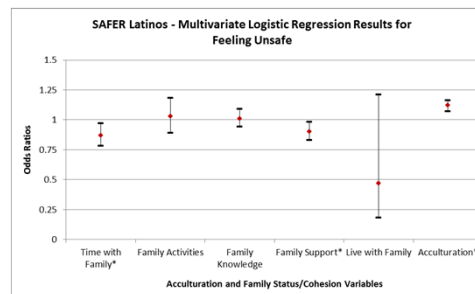
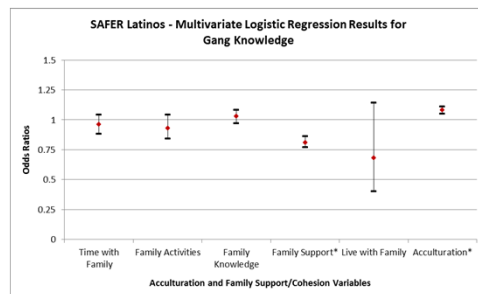
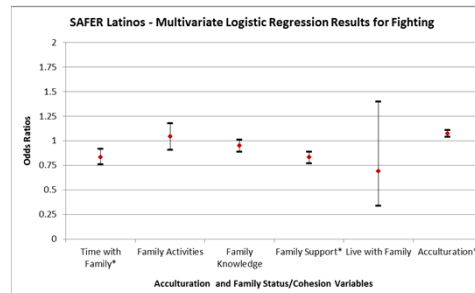
## METHODS

- Analysis of repeated cross-sectional data from 2008 (baseline) and 2009 (follow-up) of SAFER Latinos, N = 787
  - Baseline: n = 389 (Culmore = 204; Langley Park = 185)
  - Follow-up: n = 398 (Culmore = 204; Langley Park = 194)
- Statistical analyses using SAS version 9.3
  - Constructs: family status and cohesion, acculturation, and violence
  - Bivariate comparisons and colinearity
  - Multivariate regression analyses
  - Statistical significance at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level
- Primary predictors: family status/cohesion and acculturation
  - Continuous: time with family ( $\alpha = 0.52 - 0.78$ ), family activities ( $\alpha = 0.55 - 0.65$ ), family knowledge ( $\alpha = 0.80 - 0.86$ ), family support ( $\alpha = 0.78 - 0.82$ ), acculturation ( $\alpha = 0.93 - 0.96$ )
  - Dichotomous: live with family
- Outcomes: violence
  - Continuous: victimization ( $\alpha = 0.44 - 0.73$ ), non-violence attitudes and beliefs ( $\alpha = 0.63 - 0.76$ )
  - Dichotomous: fighting, gang knowledge, feeling unsafe
- Potential confounders
  - Gender, age
  - Country of origin, country of birth
  - Language
  - Presence of family members in the U.S.
  - Time in the U.S., years at address
- Interaction
  - Survey year
  - Intervention group

## RESULTS

Variables	Multivariate Linear Regression Results for SAFER Latinos			
	Outcome Variables			
	Victimization**		Non-Violence**	
	PE (SE)	t (p-value)	PE (SE)	t (p-value)
Time with Family	-0.06 (0.01)	-4.32 (<0.001)*	0.13 (0.08)	1.65 (0.0989)
Family Activities	0.00 (0.02)	0.28 (0.7806)	0.20 (0.10)	2.08 (0.0377)*
Family Knowledge	-0.01 (0.01)	-1.89 (0.0588)	0.06 (0.05)	1.37 (0.1713)
Family Support	-0.02 (0.01)	-2.64 (0.0085)*	0.32 (0.05)	6.17 (<0.001)*
Live with Family	0.00 (0.08)	0.07 (0.9480)	0.58 (0.46)	1.26 (0.2098)
Acculturation	0.02 (0.00)	3.86 (0.0001)*	0.08 (0.02)	3.20 (0.0014)*
		Adj. R <sup>2</sup> (0.1203)		Adj. R <sup>2</sup> (0.1426)

\* Statistically significant at alpha = 0.05 level  
 \*\* The following variables were adjusted for in each model: Gender, Age, Country of Origin, Country of Birth, Years in the US, Family in the US, Years at Address, Year, and Intervention



## CONCLUSIONS

- Among Latino youth, increased family support was consistently associated with reduced opportunities and risk behaviors for violence
- Family status and cohesion were significantly associated with:
  - Decreased victimization, fighting, gang knowledge, and feeling unsafe
- Acculturation was significantly associated with:
  - Increased victimization, fighting, gang knowledge, and feeling unsafe
- Acculturation, family status, and cohesion were significantly associated with:
  - Increased non-violence attitudes and beliefs
- Future interventions should incorporate components focusing on family support to prevent youth violence engagement among ethnic minorities and immigrants
- Further research on the influence of acculturation is necessary
- Strengths
  - Minimal loss to follow-up concerns
  - Diminishes certain biases, including educational effect
  - Adjusted for multiple confounders
- Limitations
  - Cannot evaluate individual-level changes over time
  - Less statistical power and precision
  - Other environmental factors not known or collected may impact findings

## SELECTED REFERENCES

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