

Longitudinal Effects of Perceived Immigration Threats on Sleep and Mental Health of Latinx Adolescents



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BACKGROUND: Anti-immigrant rhetoric and related threats may compromise the health of U.S. Latinx adolescents

OBJECTIVE: Examine how immigration-related worries and behavioral change are associated with changes in Latinx adolescent sleep problems directly and indirectly through mental health symptoms

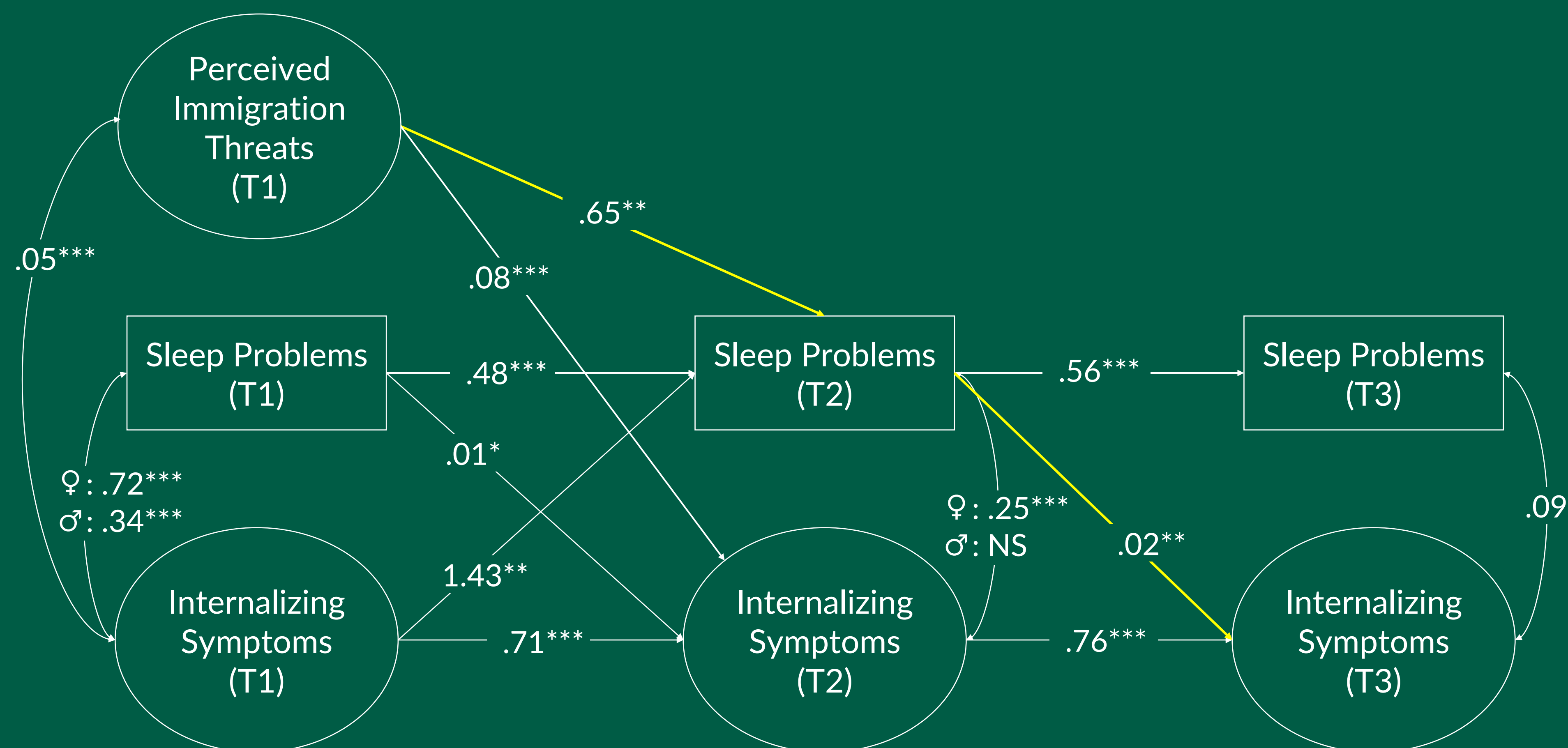
METHODS:

- 3 waves of data from Pathways to Health/ Caminos al Bienestar study
- T1: 2021, T2: 2022, T3: 2023
- N = 547 Latinx adolescents in suburban Atlanta, GA (emerging immigrant area)
- 55.2% female, $M_{age} = 13.31$, $SD = .97$
- Multiple group longitudinal Structural Equation Models (SEM) by gender tested direct and indirect paths, controlling for age and maternal education

MEASURES:

- **Perceived Immigration Threats (T1)**
 - 14 items ($\alpha = .94$, T1)
 - *Example items:* In the past year, how often due to immigration actions and news...
 - Have you avoided seeking medical care or help from the police?
 - Do you worry that members of your family may get separated?
 - (1 = almost never or never to 5 = almost always or always)
- **Sleep Problems (T1-T3)**
 - 13 items ($\alpha = .54-.65$, T1-T3)
 - Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) of sleep quality, latency, duration, and disturbances in past month
- **Internalizing Symptoms (T1-T3)**
 - Youth Self Report ($\alpha = .94$, T1-T3)
 - (1) anxious/depressed, 12 items
 - (2) withdrawn/depressed, 8 items
 - (3) somatic complaints, 9 items
 - Past 6 months

Immigration-related worries and behavioral change may indirectly increase Latinx adolescents' depression and anxiety through increased sleep problems.



NOTE: Unstandardized coefficients shown for significant paths. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; NS = non-significant. ♀ = female; ♂ = male. Model fit statistics: $\chi^2(233) = 373.237$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .047 (90% CI: .038, .056); CFI = .96; TLI = .96; SRMR = .072.



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RESULTS:

- T1 immigration threats associated with increases in:
 - T2 internalizing symptoms
 - T2 sleep problems
- From T1 to T2:
 - Sleep problems related to increased internalizing symptoms
 - Internalizing symptoms related to increased sleep problems
- T2 sleep problems related to increases in T3 internalizing symptoms
- Indirect path: T1 immigration threats to T2 sleep problems to T3 internalizing symptoms

DISCUSSION:

- Bidirectional relationship between internalizing symptoms and sleep problems suggest interplay between mental health and physical health
- Significant indirect path indicates potential underlying mechanism of how immigration-related worries and behavioral withdrawal impact mental health outcomes in Latinx adolescents
- Potential to mitigate Latinx co-occurring adolescent sleep problems and poor mental health by reducing anti-immigrant rhetoric and restrictive policies in the U.S.
- Need to address socio-political factors to promote overall well-being among Latinx adolescents

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