Cultural Issues in Behavior Change for Latinos: Smoking and HIV as examples

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Main Ideas Today:

1) In addition to individual and social factors, culture can contribute to understanding health behaviors, including sexual behavior and smoking

2) Examples of culturally sensitive interventions: complex, but feasible
Machismo is Complex

• Males have power
  - “He lets me wear what I want”

• Men must prove their masculinity
  - virility, fearlessness, don’t show pain
  - sexual coercion and poor sexual control is expected
  - homophobia is often a result

• But, Macho men provide and protect the family
  - women want “un macho;” code of honor and respect
Unmarried Latino Adult Study

- Random digit dial telephone survey
- 1500 Latino unmarried adults from 10 states
- Represented 87% of US Latinos
- Qualitative work to develop questionnaire
- Questions about condom use, sexual coercion, machismo
Men Hold Traditional Gender Role Beliefs

• 44%  Sex before marriage is more important for men
• 38%  It’s harmful for men to get excited and not ejaculate
• 28%  Women should pay the consequences if they flirt
• 22%  Man shows disrespect if he talks about sex to woman
• 18%  Dangerous for woman to know as much about sex as a man
Men Reported Sexual Coercion

In the last 12 months,

• 31% Told a lie to convince woman to have sex

• 51% Woman initially resisted but changed her mind

• 54% Woman felt pain during sex

• 68% Insisted on sex when woman wasn’t interested
Traditional Gender Roles Lead to Sexual Coercion in Latino Men

$n = 594$

Male-Female Age Difference

- In Latin America, common for men to be 10-20 years older than their wives (part of machismo?)
- In U.S., Hispanic girls are more likely to have an older boyfriend, families accept them
- A boyfriend two or more years older correlated with:
  - Unwanted sexual advances
  - Sex in 6th-9th graders (often coerced)

Childhood Sexual Abuse

- Sexual silence/discomfort in culture facilitates abuse “Dangerous for women to know too much”
- More common with close relatives and more severe among Latinos
- Twice as likely among Latino gay men than gay men of other ethnicities
  - 22% vs. 12% in a nationally representative sample

Culture May Be Protective

• “Familismo” obligates family members to help each other

• Children are highly valued by parents and families

• Protecting the family is an important obligation and a positive value of machismo

• Extended family/fictive kin can play an important role

• Respect and power distance make authority figures and parents more effective
Culture Influences Sexual Behavior

- Machismo may encourage use of force
- Older boyfriend puts girl at disadvantage
- High rates of sexual abuse are a concern
- Sexual discomfort makes intervention more difficult
- Family may be a source of resiliency
Developing Culturally Sensitive Interventions, An Example

Intervention to reduce smoking in Latinos in San Francisco

Used Theory of Reasoned Action

Elicitations of consequences of smoking/ quitting

Survey of Latino and White smokers (N = 413)

Pattern of cultural differences identified

Spanish-language intervention addresses cultural issues
For Latinos, quitting smoking is more likely to:
- Give a better example to their children
- Improve relationship with the family ("familismo")
- Improve taste in your mouth (bad breath and "simpatia")

For Whites, quitting smoking is more likely to:
- Make you feel you accomplished something hard (individualism)
- Reduce burn holes in clothes
- Result in weight gain, difficulty concentrating (addiction)

Multi-Component Community Intervention

*Guía para Dejar de Fumar*

100,000 distributed over 4 years

Quit Smoking Contests

Over 300 smokers in each, 80% men

Radio and TV PSAs

20-minute individual counseling

Health provider guide

Community outreach (Board, video to community groups)
1) Language of the intervention
   - Low literacy materials
   - Emphasis on family (“Mama, I quit for you”)

2) Metaphors and values
   - Bad example and family health emphasized
   - Immediate effects like bad smell emphasized

3) Content
   - Full color guide to quitting
A Culturally-Sensitive Intervention
Part 2

4) Methods/Procedures for achieving goals
   - mail and individual counseling rather than groups
   - quit smoking contest

5) Goals
   - people urge friends and family to quit

6) Context
   - used billboards to combat tobacco ads
   - community festivals, Spanish-language PSAs

Results of Evaluation

Annual cross-sectional surveys of 2,000 Latino adults in SF assessed smoking and exposure to the intervention.

Smoking decreased from 1986-1989:
- 39% to 24% among men
- 17% to 12% among women

Decrease was larger among Spanish speaking.

By 1989, over one in four smokers had a copy of *Guia*.

**Draw the Line/Respect the Line:**

**Another Example**

- 20-lesson HIV prevention intervention for middle schools
  - aimed at postponing sexual activity
  - resistance and negotiation skills
  - modeling and guided practice of skills

- 19 schools were randomized to treatment or control
  - 2829 students followed for 3 years

- At 36 months, boys, but not girls, in treatment schools were less likely to have had sex compared to controls

Lessons Learned:

*Draw the Line/Respect the Line*

- Classrooms are not conducive to culturally specific interventions
- Refusal skills are culturally specific; *simpatía* requires indirect resistance
- Hispanic boys were as impacted as other ethnicities
- Older boyfriends may explain lack of effect on girls
Culture influences beliefs and values that determine behavior.

Effective prevention in Latinos will require culturally specific interventions.

Culturally sensitive interventions require extensive qualitative and quantitative research.

Invoking family obligations may be useful in addressing machismo and smoking.
Collaborative HIV Prevention in Minority Communities: How it Works

- For three summers, scholars develop research ideas, take seminars
- Ongoing collaboration throughout the year with mentor, others
- Individualized programming, focus on personal research plan
- Funding:
  - One-time $25,000 grant
  - Summer stipend
- Opportunity to interact with others working on similar issues

http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/projects/minorityindex.html