Developing a Community-Based Parenting Intervention for Rural Alabama Latino Families

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Although Latinos represent 12.5% of the U.S. population, they are underrepresented in research (Blewett et al., 2003)

Especially lacking is research related to special needs of rural or agricultural Latino families
2000 census indicated that 16.1% of Albertville, AL residents are Latino, making Albertville the 4th largest Latino community in Alabama (Alabama Department of Mental Health, 2003)

Actual population of Latinos in Marshall county is probably considerably higher, since as many as 90% may be undocumented (Patino, 2002)
Health Problems of Immigrant Latino Children Noted in Previous Studies

- higher rates of depression, phobias/fears, anxiety, school refusal, and suicide compared to African-American or Caucasian children
Problems Related to Changes in Family Structure among Immigrant Families

• The Latino Consortium of the American Academy of Pediatrics Center for Child Health Research (2002) identified the need for studies to examine the impact of immigration on family dynamics and to develop culturally appropriate interventions to help families through this transition.
Preliminary Study: Child Health Needs of Rural Alabama Latino Families

- Pilot Study Funded by Southern Agromedicine Institute to conduct focus groups to identify parents’ perceptions of children’s physical and mental health needs, and parenting concerns
Methods

• 16 focus groups
• 8 with mothers and 8 with fathers
• Focus groups led by native Spanish speakers
• Each group had a co-moderator who monitored tape recording equipment and took notes of meeting
Sample

- Criteria:
  - Latino mother or father over age 19
  - Speak Spanish
  - At least one member of family works in agriculture or chicken processing plant
  - Have 1 or more children less than 12 years old

- Final sample included 54 mothers and 34 fathers
- The 16 focus groups were conducted in April and May 2005
- 8 groups at St. William Catholic Church in Guntersville
- 8 groups at Centro Hispano in Albertville
Preliminary Findings

• Barriers to Health Care
  – Financial – lack of insurance, cost of services
  – Barriers Related to Access to Services – lack of physicians and dentists, lack of bilingual health care providers, communication problems, problems with documentation (false names), problems getting off work for health appointments, services too crowded
Barriers to Health Care

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Barriers to Health Care, cont.

• Other Barriers – perception of racism/discrimination, lack of confidence in health care provider, fear of disapproval for use of home remedies, cultural differences, inconsistent advise, feeling impotent to resolve health problems
Concerns Related to Parenting

- Discipline
- Fear that children will report them to teachers/police if they use physical punishment
- Rebelde
- Work stress
- Communication problems
Parenting concerns, cont.

• Lack of time with children
• Trauma from own childhood
• Overprotection
• Child care during work
Services Needed

• Bilingual doctors and nurses
• Bilingual dentists
• Mental health services
• Interpreters
• Providers who are sensitive to Latino culture
• Information about parenting, health, and services/benefits***
• Child care
• Parks/recreational programs
• Latino center
• Access to medicines at reasonable cost
Phase 2 Pilot Study

- Development of Marshall County Latino Health Community Partnership
Project Idea

- Pilot Study Needs Assessment to Support R21 Parenting Intervention Proposal
- Proposal for Intramural Funding under review
Specific Aims

• Identify perceptions of Latino adolescents in Marshall County Alabama related to their level of acculturation, stresses related to acculturation, parental behaviors, and family conflict;

• Identify attitudes and behaviors of Latino adolescents in Marshall County Alabama related to substance use, sexuality, tobacco use, and academic achievement;

• Identify perceptions of parents of Latino adolescents in Marshall County related to their level of acculturation, stresses related to acculturation, parental competence, family conflict, and parental isolation;
Specific Aims, cont.

• Identify topics that Latino adolescents and their parents consider important for inclusion in family life/parenting

• programs for Latino families in Marshall County, Alabama; and

• Identify format (timing, location, frequency, length, and teaching methods) of parenting/family life education programs preferred by Latino adolescents and parents in Marshall County, Alabama
Theoretical Framework

• Intervention will be based on Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (2004) which proposes that human development occurs through a process of progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between the individual and persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment.
• Chaotic environments that are characterized by lack of structure and unpredictability are major sources of disruption in optimal developmental processes
• Immigrant Latino families are particularly at risk for these chaotic disruptions, due to stresses in work and home environments, and communication challenges
Stresses that Enhance Chaotic Environments of Latino Immigrant Families

- Language barriers, cultural differences, lack of traditional family support systems, fear of immigration authorities; poverty, lack of access to health and social services, and stresses related to acculturation
Acculturation – “process of change that occurs when culturally distinct groups and individuals come into contact with another culture”
“(Samaniego & Gonzales, 1999)”
Stresses Related to Acculturation

- Increased acculturation of adolescents is associated with negative health and social outcomes including increased rates of substance abuse and delinquency.

- Negative outcomes may be related to intercultural and family conflict, different rates of acculturation in parents and adolescents, susceptibility to negative peer pressure, and acculturation-related changes in parenting behaviors.
Goals of Parenting and Family Life Education Programs for Parents with Adolescent Children

- Increase parental understanding of effective strategies for communication and discipline
- Promote parental involvement and monitoring of adolescent behaviors
- Promote increased parental understanding of adolescent development and strategies to prevent substance abuse and risky sexual behaviors in adolescents
Philosophy of Nurturing Parenting Program (Crianza con Cariño)

- Nurturing fathers and mothers are born out of nurturing men and women
- Positive self-worth plays a significant role in becoming a nurturing parent
- Parenting is a family affair
- Parenting is a role
- Nurturing one’s self is an important aspect of nurturing children
- Change is evolutionary, not revolutionary… it takes time for new attitudes, skills and emotions to be integrated into a person’s pattern of behavior
Pilot Study Needs Assessment

- Descriptive Exploratory Design
- Sample – 50 Latino youth (ages 10-18), living in Marshall County, Alabama, and their parents, with telephone access
- Data Collectors – Two Latino women and one Latino male, from Marshall County will collect data from parents and adolescents who do not speak English
- Nursing student will collect data from adolescents who speak English
Methodological Issues

• How to collect the data? Phone interviews? Home visits? Setting up research “booth” at Sunday soccer games?
• Payment of data collectors by the interview? Is this coercion?
• How to avoid potential problems with falsification of data?
Your Ideas???