LATINO TEENS PERSPECTIVES ON DATING RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING VIOLENCE
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Oral Presentation

Background / Significance: Across the U.S., 11.4% of Latino/Latina high school students reported physical dating violence in the past 12 months (CDC, 2011). Previous research indicated that among adolescents, attitudes and correlates of violence differed by gender, culture and acculturation. However, scant qualitative research exploring Latino teen's perspectives on dating violence and relationships exists.

Purpose of the study/project: This study explores the perspectives of Latino teens specifically Mexican American males, on adolescent dating relationships and violence

Conceptual framework: Tensions between masculinity and respect for women, identified in the initial open coding scheme, were analyzed by employing three theoretical and interpretive reading lenses: precarious manhood, traditional machismo, and caballerismo.

Sample Description/Population: The participants were 23 Latino teens ages 13-18 who self-identified as Mexican American; 8 (35%) were first-generation immigrants, 11 (48%) were second generation, and four (17%) were third or higher generation. All were bilingual Spanish/English.

Setting: Local church parish and College of Nursing at Marquette University

Method/Design & Procedure: Focus groups (5) were conducted in English by the primary investigators and trained research assistants. Open coding identified four themes. Further coding, guided by the theoretical construct precarious manhood, traditional machismo and caballerismo, and analysis was then conducted across these themes

Results/Outcomes: Four themes were derived during the initial open coding: intersection of gender, culture and age; definitions and nature of dating relationships; definitions and nature of dating violence; and responses to dating violence. A tension between a cultural value of respect for women (caballerismo) and what seemed to be more traditional values of male dominance (precarious manhood and traditional machismo) were further explored through analysis of the data through the lenses of precarious manhood, traditional machismo, and caballerismo. Findings support presence of these concepts in each of the focus group discussions. These findings are fully explicated in the paper.

Conclusions/Implications: These findings facilitate understanding of Mexican American male adolescents’ perspectives on DV and the unique tension experienced between the development of masculinity within the dominant US culture and the unique cultural influences of traditional machismo and caballerismo. Understanding this tension during this seminal period of socialization has the potential to advance culturally-relevant prevention and intervention strategies within this population.