Ethnic Disparities in Diagnosis, Interventions, and Conceptualizations of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Texan Families

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Introduction

• Disparities diversely affect socially disadvantaged groups: longer/confusing diagnostic process, less access/use of interventions and resources, and negative conceptualizations of ASD.
• Are potentially avoidable: 1. Identification & 2. Process.
• Aim to reduce and eliminate disparities.
• Prior research suggests Latinx populations have the most disparities. Ex. Less likely to identify ASD, language, economic barriers.
• Culture is linked to ASD disparities and cultures between Latinx immigrants and U.S. born Latins vary.
• No previous information on Texas Latinx immigrants.
• This study investigated the disparities in diagnostic process, interventions and services, and conceptualizations of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) between White, U.S. born Latinx, and Latinx immigrant families of Texas.

Hypothesis

Latino immigrants will have a longer diagnostic process, less access to interventions & resources, and more negative conceptualizations of ASD.

Methods

• Measures: data was obtained from a needs assessment survey sent out across central Texas.
• Participants: n = 84
  - Latinx immigrant (n = 12)
  - U.S. born Latinx (n = 19)
  - White (n = 53)
• Analytic Plan:
  - Utilizing SPSS to code responses, transform data, find means and percentages, & conduct ANOVAs and t-tests for significance.

Survey Measures

• Demographics
  - Caregiver characteristics: age, sex, ethnicity
  - Child characteristics: age, sex, support needs
• Diagnostic Process
  - Atypical behavior → receiving medical diagnosis → beginning interventions
• Interventions & Resources
  - Sources of ASD info & access/use of therapy & interventions
• Conceptualizations
  - Parent and community beliefs about ASD

Results

Demographics showed no significant difference in child support needs but significant differences in income, education, and insurance.

U.S. born Latinx had shortest diagnostic process, then Latinx Immigrants, then White.

Latino Immigrants received early intervention services most often but needed services least.

U.S. born Latinx had most negative conceptualizations but most understood child’s strengths/challenges.

Conclusion

• Contrary to my hypothesis, results suggest that U.S. born Latinx in Texas were the ethnicity with most differences.
• Not all differences are disparities.
• U.S. born Latinx showed the fastest diagnostic process.
• Latinx immigrants had more differences in demographics but no significant difference in child support needs.
• Future research is needed to evaluate the role ethnicity plays in disparities for ASD.

Knowledge of these disparities or differences can help:
• Health care services improve confusing diagnostic processes.
• Provide more bilingual initiatives.
• Ensure that all ethnic groups in Texas have equal access to services to further the developmental outcome of their children.

Limitations

• Selection bias
• Limited sample size is not very representative of the population
• Significance tests not conducted
• Future research should have a larger pool of participants.

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References