Interpersonal Victimization and Help-Seeking among Latino Women: Results from the SALAS¹ Study

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Victimization Among Latino Women

- Interpersonal victimization
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Threat
  - Stalking

- Mixed rates in comparison to non-Latino women
  - Lifetime physical abuse rates for Latino women range from 19.5% to 70%
  - Sexual abuse rates for Latino women range from 14% to 42%
  - Latino rates generally lower than African Americans but higher than whites
Polyvictimization and Revictimization

- Limited research on polyvictimization and revictimization among sexually victimized women
  - CSA as a risk factor for adult sexual victimization
- For Latino women
  - CSA – adult sexual violence evidence consistent with general victimization research
  - Relationship between sexual and physical in intimate relationships
Help-Seeking

- **Formal resources**
  - Report to police
  - Seek out legal remedies (e.g., restraining orders)
  - Counseling/social services
  - Medical services for injured women

- **Informal approaches**
  - Talk with family/friends
  - Speak with member of clergy
  - Talk informally with other professionals (e.g., teachers, legal aide, and school staff)
Formal Help-Seeking Research

- Characteristics of formal help-seeking among Latinos
  - General reluctance to report victimization to police
  - Limited resources for mental health and reluctance to seek services

- Influencing factors
  - Fears around immigration/deportation
  - Language barriers
  - Lack of understanding of the U.S. criminal justice system
Informal Help-Seeking Research

- Mixed evidence on whether Latino women are more likely to disclose victimization to family or friends
- Little research looking as to whether they are willing to seek out help from the church/clergy
Importance of Cultural Factors

- Cultural factors influence Latino women’s beliefs about victimization and their help-seeking behaviors
  - Acculturation
    - Language barriers
    - Immigration status
    - Reinforce traditional cultural beliefs about gender roles
  - Gender Roles
    - Marianismo, machismo
  - Religiosity
Previous Limitations

- Geographically limited samples of Latinos
- National samples may include only a small sample of Latinos and not include culturally relevant factors
- Comprehensive profile of victimization of Latino women not yet available
- Polyvictimization has not been studied
- Help-seeking studies limit to one type of victimization and are often convenience samples
Key Aims of the SALAS Study

- Obtain victimization rates across various forms of interpersonal violence with a national sample of Latino women
- Determine degree of co-existing forms of victimization and re-victimization
- Evaluate formal and informal help-seeking efforts by victimized Latino women
- Examine culturally-relevant factors associated with victimization and help-seeking
- Determine the psychosocial impact of victimization in our sample
Methods

- Data from the Sexual Assault AmongLatinas (SALAS) Study
  - National sample of 2,000 adult Latino women
  - Women were interviewed using random digit dial (RDD) methodology
  - Survey conducted in the participant’s preferred language
  - Sample was targeted from high density Latino areas based on census figures
  - Response rate 31%, cooperation rate 54%
Instruments

- Lifetime Trauma and Victimization History (LTVH)
  - Sexual violence
  - Physical assault
  - Stalking
  - Threat
  - Witnessed

- Help-Seeking Questionnaire
  - Formal (police, courts, social services, medical services)
  - Informal (talk with friends/family, clergy, etc.)
Instruments

• Brief Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans (ARSMA-II)
  • Anglo and Mexican orientation subscales

• Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Short Form)
  • Feminine and masculine subscales

• RCOPE Scale
  • Positive religious coping
  • Negative religious coping
Demographic Summary

- Mean age = 47.76 years
- Approximately 63% of the sample has a H.S. education or less
- Approximately 61% of the sample are U.S. Citizens (either U.S. born or naturalized)
  - Only 4.7% of the sample is undocumented
- Over 50% of the sample is married
## Sample Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity Background/Country of Origin</th>
<th>U.S. Born (n = 533)</th>
<th>Immigrant (n = 1,439)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Distribution

- Texas: 50%
- California: 25%
- Florida: 20%
- Arizona: 2%
- New Mexico: 2%
- Other: 1%

State
Results
Victimization Rates

- 53.6% (weighted) had at least one lifetime victimization experience
- 66.2% (weighted) of victimized women had more than one victimization experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victimization Type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Weighted rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Physical Assault</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Sexual Assault</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Stalking Victimization</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Threat Victimization</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Witnessed Victimization</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Childhood Polyvictimization

Child Threat 2.01** Child Physical

Child Physical 1.21** Child Stalking
Adulthood Polyvictimization

- Adult Physical
- Adult Threat
  - 3.65**

- Adult Sexual
- Adult Witness
  - 1.08**
Revictimization

1.47**
1.56**

1.22**
1.41**
Cultural Factors and Victimization

Any Vict
Physical
Sexual
Threat
Witness
Stalk

Anglo Acculturation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Immigrant</th>
<th>U.S. Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Vict</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalk</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion: Victimization

- Majority of Latino women reported at least one type of victimization (53.6%); threat and witness most common, but range from 22.2% (sexual) to 28.3% (witnessed)

- Childhood vulnerability centers on physical, sexual and witnessed violence
Discussion: Victimization

- By and large, when we speak of Latina victims we are speaking of victims who experienced more than one type of victimization (66.2%).

- Victimized women are likely to have more than one victimization experience with significantly elevated risk for polyvictimization and revictimization.
Discussion: Cultural Factors

- Immigrant status related to decreased levels of victimization
  - Traditional values
  - Reporting

- Anglo orientation related to increased levels of victimization
  - Disruption of cultural patterns
  - Minority stress
  - Isolation
Help-Seeking

- 77% of victimized women sought some type of help, either formal or informal, or both
- Informal help-seeking more common than formal help-seeking
## Help-Seeking Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical services</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraining order</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal charges</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANY FORMAL</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family member</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANY INFORMAL</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Most Distressful Victimization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victimization Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forced sexual activity</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fondling</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault childhood</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault with weapon</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat with weapon</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted sexual assault</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapped</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Help-Seeking by Victimization Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Help</th>
<th>Informal Only</th>
<th>Formal Only</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANY VICTIMIZATION</strong></td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking***</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault w/o weapon***</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault with weapon**</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical assault childhood***</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threat</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat w/o weapon***</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat w/ weapon***</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fondling***</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted sexual assault**</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sexual activity***</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Any informal help-seeking

SES, Weapon

Age, Child
Predictors of informal help-seeking

Husband

Parent
SES
Weapon
Age

Sibling
Immigrant
Predictors of informal help-seeking

Other Family
- Age
- Sexual

Staff
- SES

Friend
- Age Child Threat

Clergy
-
Any formal help-seeking

Stalk
Child
Predictors of formal help-seeking

- Police
- Child
- Restraining order
- Child
- Criminal charges
- Child
Predictors of formal help-seeking

Medical

Agency

Age
Child
Number of victimizations

- Number of victimizations associated with an increase in the likelihood of formal help-seeking
- Number of victimizations related to an increase in likelihood of specific informal help-seeking efforts
  - Sibling, Friend
  - Related to a decrease in likelihood of talking to partner
  - Talk to sibling/friend
  - Medical
  - Report to police
  - Restraining Order
  - Criminal Charges
  - Agency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Formal  ($R^2 = .09$)</th>
<th>Informal ($R^2 = .04$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.99↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>0.84↓</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Vic</td>
<td>1.23↑</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo Orientation</td>
<td>1.05↑</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Religious Coping</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Religious Coping</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion: Help-Seeking

- Consistent with other studies, informal help-seeking responses were the most often sought and formal help-seeking responses were sought less often.

- Increased victimization related to increased help-seeking (survivor model).

- Childhood victimization especially unlikely to be followed with help-seeking, both formal and informal.
Discussion: Help-Seeking

- Overall, some evidence was found that acculturation and gender role influence help-seeking behaviors for this sample.

- Cultural influences on help-seeking
  - Anglo orientation related to overall utilization of formal help-seeking resources
  - Higher SES related to less formal help-seeking
  - Family sought most often
  - Talking to a friend related to anglo orientation and masculine
Take-Home Messages

- High rate of lifetime victimization
- Victimized women are likely to have more than one victimization experience
- Women are not seeking out formal help-seeking services
- Most predominate help sought is from social network
- Attention to cultural factors is needed