

# An Exploratory Evaluation of Parent-Child Communication: A Framework and Study Design for Addressing Prevention of Hispanic Teen Risky Behaviors.

Megan Masciola, BA, MEd, MSW – Candidate at NCSSS  
M. L. Zajicek-Farber, MSW, PhD – Associate Professor at NCSSS  
National Catholic School of Social Service (NCSSS)  
Consortium for Catholic Social Teaching (CCST)  
Center for the Advancement of Child, Youth, and Families (CACYF)



## STUDY PROPOSAL

- To conduct an exploratory evaluation of an adapted intervention the *¡Cuidate!* program with Hispanic young adolescents and their parents in Alexandria, Virginia.
- To examine whether improvement in parents' communication about teen risky behavior from before to after the intervention is associated with corresponding improvement in teen communication about risky sexual behavior from before to after participation in the intervention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- The birth rate among Hispanic adolescents was 38.0 births per 1,000 girls, aged 15-19, in 2014, compared to rates of 34.0 and 17.3 for African American and white adolescents (Hamilton, Martin, Osterman, Curtin, & Matthews, 2015)
- 38% of Hispanic teens that dropped out of high school in 2012 cited motherhood as a barrier to completing their education (Shuger, 2012)
- The rate of teen pregnancies for Hispanic teenagers in Virginia 35.7, compared to 35.6 for African American teenagers and 17.7 for white teenagers in 2013 (Ventura, Hamilton, Mathews, 2014).
- Research suggests that disapproving maternal attitudes toward sex are a protective factor against risky sexual behavior for adolescents (Sieving, McNeely, & Blum, 2000; Romo, Lefkowitz, Sigman, & Terry, 2002)
- Parent communication surrounding sexual behavior is positively correlated with the delay of initiation of sexual activity among adolescents (Hubbard, Giese, & Rainey, 1998; Dilorio, McCarty, Resnicow, Lehr, & Denzmore, 2007)

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. For Hispanic parents with adolescents, does participation in an education program designed to sensitize parents how to discuss teen concerns regarding sexuality significantly improve the level of parent-teen communication surrounding risky sexual behavior?
2. For Hispanic teens, does participation in the culturally adapted intervention improve their communication on risky sexual behaviors?
3. Is there an association between communication changes of youths and their parents, who participated in the intervention over time?



## THEORETICAL SUPPORT

- The study is theoretically grounded in family communications patterns theory (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006; Koerner, & Schrott, 2014).
- Parent and Youth interventions that are culture specific and theoretically based have the greatest chance of success (Hutchinson et al., 2003).
- The adaptation of *¡Cuidate!* program is grounded in theory of reasoned action and planned behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

## STUDY VARIABLES

- **Independent Variables:**  
Participation in the *¡Cuidate!* Manualized Intervention – 6 1hour sessions: discussions, videos, role-play, and skills building activities  
Conducted with bilingual facilitators!
- **Control Variables:** Level of acculturation - Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS), Linguistic Proficiency Subscale (BAS/LP) (Marín and Gamba, 1996).
- **Dependent Variable:** Parent-adolescent sexual risk communication - Parent-Teen Sexual Risk Communication Scale (PTSRC-III) (Hutchinson, 2007); Spanish translation.

## SAMPLE PARTICIPANTS

- Non-Probability Convenience Sample
- Sample Size: N = 60
- Sample Description for Hispanic Youth and Parent:
  - Age (Youth 10 – 14 years)
  - Gender
  - Education
  - No. of Children in Family
  - Family Income
  - Youth Prior History of Risky Behavior
  - Length of Time in US

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

- **Study Design:** Pilot study with Pre - Post evaluation
- **Unit of Analysis:** Individual Parent and Youth
- **Data Collection:** 3 Time points: Pre – Post – Post (3 months)
- **Analysis Strategy:**
  - Measures of central tendency and variability for all measures and bivariate correlation of all measures.
  - Paired-t-test to examine changes in communication from before (pre-test) to after (post-test) the intervention.
  - Repeated Measures of Analysis of Variance (RANOVA) to examine changes in parent and youth communication, while also controlling for level of parent and youth acculturation.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

- Unique – non-generalizable sample.
- Exploratory design without a control group.
- Design has low internal validity as it is subject to bias of many external factors; however, design has time-order for studying change in the dependent variable.
- Design has limited external validity as it is non-generalizable; however, it is practical, and realistic for community implementation.

### Future Research Recommendations:

- Increase sample size
- Use a classic experiment for a design.
- Use a longer period longitudinal design

## ETHICAL CONDUCT IN RESEARCH

- Study requires IRB approval : Parents' would provide *Informed Consent* during a bi-lingual interview prior to the study and Youth would provide a verbal assent.
- De-identify data collection by assigning numeric code to assure and protect confidentiality.
- Keep demographic contact data separated from study data accessible to research trained staff
- Risk: None immediate, long-term unknown
- Benefits: Provide dinner snacks and transportation support to study participants.
- Train research staff on their responsibilities.