



# A national probability study of problematic substance use and treatment receipt among Latino caregivers involved with child welfare: The influence of nativity and legal status<sup>☆</sup>

Megan Finno-Velasquez<sup>a,\*</sup>, Kristen D. Seay<sup>b</sup>, Amy S. He<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Social Work, New Mexico State University, 11024 Montgomery Blvd. NE, PMB #300, Albuquerque, NM 87111, United States

<sup>b</sup> College of Social Work, University of South Carolina, Hamilton College, Columbia, SC 29208, United States

<sup>c</sup> School of Social Work, University of Denver, 2148 S. High Street, Denver, CO 80208, United States

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 1 August 2016

Received in revised form 20 October 2016

Accepted 21 October 2016

Available online 22 October 2016

### Keywords:

Problematic substance use

Child welfare

Latino

Immigrant

Services

## ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to determine whether differences exist in problematic substance use and receipt of services by nativity (U.S. born, foreign born) and legal status (U.S. citizen, legal resident, undocumented) among Latino parents reported for child abuse and neglect. We used data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II and weighted bivariate chi-square tests to compare rates of problematic substance use and services receipt by nativity and legal status. Weighted logistic regression models estimated the effect of immigrant status on the odds of service receipt. Rates of problematic substance use were not significantly different by nativity or legal status. Service receipt was significantly lower for foreign-born (2.1%) versus U.S.-born (9.4%) parents. Compared to U.S. citizens (8.1%) and legal residents (4.3%), services receipt was least likely for undocumented parents (0.3%). Adjusting for covariates, nativity did not affect services receipt but undocumented legal status reduced the odds of receiving services by 95%. Data indicate that disparities do exist in receipt of substance use services among immigrant parents, especially undocumented parents, compared to U.S. born parents. Findings also suggest that the protective effect of immigrant status on problematic substance use, i.e., the immigrant paradox, may not apply to child-welfare-involved families.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Background

As a result of decades of increased immigration, the U.S. demographic is transforming. It is estimated that 28.6% of the country's population will be Latino by 2050 (Colby & Ortman, 2015). With this population change, the proportion of Latinos involved with the child welfare system is also on the rise. In 2013, 22.4% of children who experienced abuse and neglect in the United States were Latino, compared to 14.2% in 2000 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). National probability estimates have shown that among Latino children reported to a child welfare agency, more than a third have a primary caregiver who is an immigrant (Dettlaff, Earner, & Phillips, 2009). Approximately 19% of these children live with at least one parent who is undocumented and 11% live with a parent who is a noncitizen legal resident (Berger Cardoso, Dettlaff, Finno-Velasquez, Scott, & Faulkner, 2014).

Problematic substance use is a significant and enduring problem among parents with child welfare involvement. Although estimates vary greatly, as much as 40% to 80% of families involved with child welfare systems are engaged in problematic substance use (Osterling & Austin, 2008; Seay, 2015; Young, Boles, & Otero, 2007; Young, Gardner, & Dennis, 1998; Semidei, Feig-Radel, & Nolan, 2001). In non-child-welfare samples, ample evidence has shown immigrant status to be protective against substance use disorders for various Latino groups (Alegria et al., 2008; Alegria et al., 2007). However, due to a lack of nationally established methods for collecting immigration information, the influence of nativity and immigrant status on the substance use patterns of Latino parents involved with the child welfare system is unknown. Limited reports from child welfare workers have suggested that the prevalence of problematic substance use in the child welfare population may be lower among immigrants (Dettlaff et al., 2009; Berger Cardoso et al., 2014), although there is some concern that case-worker reports of parent substance use may be unreliable (Donohue, Holland, Lopez, Urgelles, & Allen, 2014).

Results diverge on access to substance abuse treatment for Latinos. Some community studies have shown Latinos to be underserved (Marsh, Cao, Guerrero, & Shin, 2009; Guerrero et al., 2013). Others have indicated that Latinos have greater or equal access to substance

<sup>☆</sup> The authors declare no conflicts of interest or competing interests.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [mfv@nmsu.edu](mailto:mfv@nmsu.edu) (M. Finno-Velasquez), [kdseay@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:kdseay@mailbox.sc.edu) (K.D. Seay), [amy.he@du.edu](mailto:amy.he@du.edu) (A.S. He).

use services compared to whites (Daley, 2005; Fosados, Evans, & Hser, 2007; Jacobson, Robinson, & Bluthenthal, 2006; Niv & Hser, 2006). Some evidence has also suggested that language and cultural issues may reduce access to treatment for Latinos (Alegría et al., 2006).

Referral to the child welfare system presents a unique opportunity for vulnerable families to be connected with many types of services, including drug and alcohol treatment, mental health services, and services to prevent recidivism, repeat maltreatment, and placement into foster care (Oliveros & Kaufman, 2011). Although research on substance abuse services with the child welfare population is more limited, several studies found associations between demographic characteristics (including age, gender, ethnicity, education, employment, number of children, and income) and receipt of services (Choi & Ryan, 2006; Barth, Gibbons, & Guo, 2006; Grella, Hser, & Huang, 2006; Traube, He, Zhu, Scalise, & Richardson, 2015). The presence of risk factors such as domestic violence and mental health problems (Semidei et al., 2001; Grella et al., 2006; Grella, Needell, Shi, & Hser, 2009) also have been associated with receipt of services for substance use disorders in child welfare samples. Additionally, several recent national child welfare studies have uncovered barriers to Latinos receiving various types of services, such as mental health and concrete support services, that can be accounted for by parent nativity and legal status (Dettlaff & Cardoso, 2010; Finno-Velasquez, 2013; Finno-Velasquez, Berger Cardoso, Dettlaff, & Hurlburt, 2015). Yet to date, the influence of immigration-related factors on receipt of drug and alcohol services among Latinos in the child welfare population remains unexamined.

Therefore, this study used a nationally representative sample of Latino parents involved with child welfare systems to estimate how nativity (U.S.-born compared to foreign-born) and legal status (U.S. citizen, legal resident, and undocumented) influence patterns of problematic substance use and receipt of services for substance use issues. The relationships between nativity and legal immigration status and substance use services were examined through the lens of Andersen's behavioral model for health services use, which characterizes receipt of services as driven by a combination of family predisposing characteristics as well as enabling conditions, needs, and contextual factors (Aday & Andersen, 1974; Andersen, 1968, 1995).

Predisposing characteristics, such as gender and age, are those considered to be unmalleable. Nativity, therefore, was treated as a predisposing characteristic because of a primary interest in knowing whether caregivers born in the United States have different patterns of need for treatment and service receipt compared with parents born elsewhere. Enabling conditions are factors that are subject to change that may enable or inhibit service receipt, such as income and insurance status. Parent legal status was considered an enabling condition because of an interest in knowing whether a parent's undocumented legal status inhibits receipt of services for substance use issues. Need for services was defined by parent self-assessment on standardized alcohol and drug measures. Contextual characteristics are other common challenges found among child welfare involved parents that may influence receipt of services for problematic substance use. These include clinical depression, physical health concerns, and experiencing domestic violence.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Study design

The second round of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW II) is a nationally representative study of 5872 children from infancy to 17 years old who were the subject of investigations of child abuse and neglect conducted by a child welfare agency between 2008 and 2009. The sample was drawn using a two-stage cluster sampling approach. Baseline interviews were conducted 4 to 6 months after completion of the child welfare investigation, between April 2008 and December 2009. Wave 2 follow-up interviews were conducted an average of 18 months after the completion of the investigation.

Wave 3 interviews were conducted 36 months post-investigation. Analysis weights were used to make nationally representative inferences for the total population of Latino children who remain in the home following an investigation. Detailed information about the NSCAW II study design is available elsewhere (Dowd et al., 2012).

### 2.2. Analytic sample

Data from Waves 1 and 2 were utilized for analyses in this study. Data were collected via interviews with the biological parent or the biological relative who was serving as the primary caregiver of the child. Foster and adoptive parents were excluded from this study because the proportion of foster and adoptive parents who were also immigrants was too small to garner meaningful estimates for this population. Because the majority of biological relatives utilized in this sample were biological parents (88.8%), we use the term *parents* in this article. Data were also collected from child welfare workers. Self-reported data on parental alcohol and drug use were only available in cases in which the child remained in the home following the baseline report. Thus, the analytic sample consisted of 842 parents who identified as Latino and whose children remained in the home following the initial investigation of child abuse and neglect. The sample was reduced to 704 for multivariate analyses that included only parents who had complete data for all variables of interest.

### 2.3. Variables

#### 2.3.1. Predisposing characteristics and enabling conditions

All parent characteristics were reported at baseline. Nativity was categorized as U.S. born or foreign born. Other predisposing parental characteristics examined included age, gender, and number of children. Legal status was categorized as U.S. citizen (U.S. born or naturalized), legal resident (permanent or temporary), or undocumented. Other enabling conditions examined were years in the United States, education, employment, and language. In the vast majority of cases, English or Spanish was the language spoken in the home, with a few parents identifying a different language, most often an indigenous language, as their preferred language. Income was assessed as a percentage of the federal poverty level (<50%, 50%–100%, 101%–200%, and >200%). Financial hardship was assessed via parent self-report, in which parents stated they were either “struggling to make it”, “getting by”, or “saving a little”. These three categories did not significantly differ in their relationship to service receipt. Therefore, for the sake of parsimony, the categories “getting by” and “saving a little” were combined. Because a quarter of undocumented parents in the target sample had missing data for the income variable, parental report of financial hardship (missing in just 1% of cases) was used as a measure of economic status in regression analysis. This served to avoid disproportionately excluding undocumented parents from multivariate analyses.

#### 2.3.2. Need

Parents were interviewed about alcohol and drug use at baseline using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) and the 20-item Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-20). The AUDIT was developed by the World Health Organization via a six-country collaborative (Australia, Bulgaria, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, and the United States) and is considered a standard measure across racial and ethnic groups and numerous countries (Saunders, Aasland, Babor, de la Fuente, & Grant, 1993). The psychometric properties of the AUDIT have been well established in a broad range of samples and settings, with high internal reliability, sensitivity, and specificity when using a cutoff score of 5 for women and 8 for men to detect harmful alcohol consumption (Berner, Kriston, Bentele, & Härter, 2007; Chuang, Wells, Bellettiere, & Cross, 2013; Meneses-Gaya, Zuardi, Loureiro, & Crippa, 2009; Reinert & Allen, 2002, 2007). It performs reasonably well with Latinos with different acculturation levels in the United States (Cherpitel & Borges,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4936478>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4936478>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)