LATINO OLDER ADULTS AND ALCOHOL USE: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Andrea Soria
California State University, Long Beach
May 2015
The purpose of this cross-sectional study was to gain a better understanding of alcohol use among older Latinos over the age of 50. The study examined the relationships among alcohol use and health, mental health, and mental health treatment.

- In the United States by 2050, the adult population aged 65 and older is expected to grow to an estimated 84 million (Ortman, Velkoff, & Hogan, 2013).

- Substance use disorders are expected to grow by 2020 among the 50-59 age group (Han, Gfroerer, Colliver, & Penne, 2009).

- Although Latinos of all ages have a lower rate of alcohol use than the national average, Latino males over the age of 50 have higher rates of binge drinking (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2010).

**Research Questions**

1. What are the drinking patterns for older adult Latinos?
2. Do age and gender influence the drinking patterns of older adult Latinos?
3. How does alcohol use affect the self-perceived health status and chronic health illness of Latinos?
4. Is there a relationship between the drinking patterns of older adult Latinos and their mental health status?
5. What factors influence whether Latinos seek alcohol use and mental health treatment?
SOCIAL WORK RELEVANCE

● The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) states that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug treatment and prevention need to be tailored to adults according to their age, gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, programs, and religious views as well as other relevant factors (2009).

● In order to accomplish this, studies that examine the alcohol use of Latinos and older adults within that population need to be conducted to understand their drinking patterns, risk factors, and patterns in seeking substance treatment as well as mental health needs.

● These studies can help create effective prevention programs that are culturally relevant and age appropriate.
CROSS CULTURAL RELEVANCE

• Substance use affects all races and ethnicities.

• Among cultural minorities in the United States, there are disparities in substance use treatment.

  • Latinos, when compared to Non-Hispanic Whites, often have greater rates of not completing alcohol treatment and not seeking alcohol treatment.

  • Latinos and African Americans were also less likely to complete federally funded substance abuse treatment programs.

  • African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans were more likely to have greater levels of socioeconomic disadvantages.

(Saloner & Le Cook, 2013).
METHODS

SAMPLE
• Only data collected from 395 adults were included: 199 female and 196 male participants.
• The requirements were participants who were Latino, over the age of 50, and reported consuming at least one alcoholic beverage in their lifetime.

DATA COLLECTION
• A secondary data analysis was conducted using the National Survey on Drug Use and Health [NSUDH] of 2012 from SAMHSA.
• The NSDUH used random selection of households from all 50 states as well as District of Columbia to recruit participants.
• There was a total of 68,309 participants (SAMHSA, 2013b).
METHODS (CONTINUED)

VARIABLES & INSTRUMENTS

• The variables that were utilized to answer the research questions were chosen based on the Behavioral Model for Vulnerable Populations (Anderson, 1995). It integrates four factors that affect a population’s access to health care:
  • Predisposing Factors: age, education, gender, and marital status.
  • Enabling Factors: geographical area, poverty level, and health insurance status.
  • Need Factors: chronic health conditions, alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence, binge use, and days drank alcohol.
  • Health Services Factors: whether participants sought alcohol use treatment and mental health treatment.

• The NSUDH utilized the Kessler 6 scale (K6) to measure psychological distress in individuals over the age of 18 (SAMSHA, 2013a).

DATA ANALYSIS

• The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze the data in order to answer the research questions.
  • A univariate analyses of frequencies, percents, means, and standard deviations were conducted.
  • Bivariate analyses were also used to analyze the research questions: Independent samples t-test, One way Analysis of Variance, Pearson's chi-square analyses, and Logistic regression analysis.
RESULTS

Alcohol Use Patterns

• Latino Men drank alcohol a greater number of days than women in the year prior to the survey.
• Latino Men between the ages of 50 to 64 reported a greater number of days in which they drank alcohol than Latinos over the age of 60.
• Although not significant, adult women and men ages 65 and older did have a higher average of days in which they participated in binge drinking than their counterparts, adults 50 to 64 years of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Drinking Patterns of Latino Older Adults</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used alcohol in the past 30 days</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge alcohol use in the past 30 days</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy alcohol use in the past 30 days</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met criteria for Alcohol abuse in the past year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met criteria for Alcohol dependence in the past year</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health

• Latinos with high blood pressure reported a greater number of days in which they consumed alcohol.
• Latinos who did not report having asthma & depression also reported more days in which they consumed alcohol.
Mental Health & Alcohol Use

- Latinos who reported being psychologically distressed also reported a greater number of days in which they drank alcohol.
- In particular, for Latino men, there was a positive correlation between their psychological distress scores and the days they drank alcohol.

Factors Associated with Alcohol & Mental Health Treatment Utilization

- Latino men were more likely to seek alcohol use treatment than Latinas.
- The likelihood of receiving mental health treatment in the past year was lower for those with less than a high school diploma.
- Living below the federal poverty threshold, alcohol dependence, anxiety & depression were associated with greater odds of receiving mental health treatment.
DISCUSSION/ IMPLICATIONS

• Latino adults ages 50 to 64 drank alcohol almost twice (93 days) as many days in the past year than Latino men ages 65 and older (47 days). These finding are consistent with Caetano et al.’s (2008) in which among Mexican American men ages 50 to 59 had the highest rate of alcohol use compared to other Latino subgroups or age groups.

• Similarly, Merrick et al. (2008) found that Latino men were more likely to participate in binge alcohol use. Moreover, men and adults over the age of 65 often exceeded the monthly or daily drinking limits (Merrick et al., 2008).

• Additionally, consistent with the literature, the findings in this study indicated that older adult Latinos with alcohol dependence were more likely to receive mental health treatment.

• Therefore, it is important for social workers in the mental health setting to be aware that older adult Latinos may not always seek alcohol use treatment for their risky alcohol behaviors but instead may seek mental health treatment. As a result, the practice and policy of screening and assessing for alcohol dependence and abuse should be implemented for older adult Latinos who present with depression, anxiety, and psychological distress.


