

**ISPN Mental Health and Wellness 2017 Grant Recipient  
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Latina adolescents in the US are more likely to experience depressive symptoms and less likely to receive treatment for depression than White adolescent girls. The Mental Health and Wellness Research Award that I received from the International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses supports my research study, *Common Patterns in Latina Adolescents' Experiences of Depressive Symptoms*. Thus far I have interviewed twenty-three Latina young women (ages 13-21) who experienced depressive symptoms during their adolescent years about the unfolding of their depressive symptoms, self-management behaviors, and mental health treatment seeking over time.

Participants described several factors that contributed to their experience of depression including pressure to succeed for their family; losing family members to migration, deportation, or divorce; and discrimination and bullying at school. Participants received messages from their family that depression was not a real problem in the Latino/a culture, leading many to hide their depression from loved ones and healthcare providers. To self-manage their depressive symptoms, participants distracted themselves with various activities, engaged in self-harm behaviors, and expressed their feelings through athletic and artistic activities. Participants who used mental health services described inconsistent use of these services and received therapy or medication that was not helpful in relieving symptoms. Participants perceived improvement in their depressive symptoms when they realized that it was their responsibility to take control of their mental health and found individuals in whom they could confide.

Implications of this research include the development of interventions to reduce stigma towards mental illness in the Latino/a culture and cultural adaptation of evidence based depression treatments to ultimately increase help-seeking and treatment utilization in this population. Immigrant friendly public policy may also help to minimize the stressors that Latina youth identify as contributing to their depressive symptoms.

The ISPN Mental Health and Wellness Research Award was very helpful to me in conducting this research as it provided me with funds to have my interviews professionally transcribed. This allowed me to focus my time on analyzing the data and developing a deep understanding of the commonalities in the experiences of Latina adolescents living with depressive symptoms.