

Latino Research Program Project

Project 3: Treatment for Depression Among Latinos

Miranda J, Schoenbaum M, Sherbourne C, Duan N, Wells K. 2004. Effects of primary care depression treatment on minority patients' clinical status and employment. Archives of General Psychiatry: 61(8): 827-834

1. Objective(s)

To determine whether standard depression treatments are as effective for ethnic minority patients as they are for white patients.

2. Methods

We used intervening variables analyses to determine whether treatments are equally effective for white and minority patients.

3. Main Findings

We found that both Latino and African American patients respond similarly to white patients when treated with adequate antidepressant medications or appropriate psychotherapy. The depression treatments result in similar reductions in depressive symptoms for minority and white individuals.

4. Significance for Policymakers, Communities, Advocacy Groups or Health Service Providers

Standard treatments for depression have been developed by studying mainly white and affluent persons with depression. Advocacy groups have justifiably raised concerns about whether these treatments are appropriate for minority community members. Our findings suggest that these treatments are equally as effective for African American, Latino, and white communities. As a result, we now know that African Americans and Latinos should have access to standard depression treatments.

Lagomasino IT, Miranda J, Dwight-Johnson M, Zhang L, Duan N, Wells KB. In press. Disparities in depression treatment for Latinos: Do patients or clinics make the difference? Psychiatric Services.

1. Objective(s)

Latino Americans are less likely to receive quality care for depression than are white Americans. In this study, we examined whether the clinics Latinos attend give poorer care than do the clinics whites attend or do Latinos tend to get less care and less effective care than whites irrespective of the clinic they attend.

2. Methods

We looked at the quality of care Latinos get in a wide variety of primary health care clinics, including those who serve mostly Latinos and those who serve mostly white patients.

3. Main Findings

Latinos tend to receive lower levels of quality care in all types of primary health care settings. It appears that Latinos receive lower rates of quality care for reasons that are not well known. Perhaps providers need to learn ways to appropriately identify and encourage appropriate care for depression for their Latino patients.

4. Significance for Policymakers, Communities, Advocacy Groups or Health Service Providers

This study suggests that to improve care for depression among Latinos, providers in all settings will need to learn how to identify depression and encourage care for Latinos.

Miranda J, Bernal G, Lau A, Kohn L, Hwang W. 2005. State of the science on psychosocial interventions for ethnic minorities. Annual Review of Clinical Psychology: 1: 113-42.

1. Objective(s)

In this chapter, we thoroughly review all literature relevant to care for mental disorders for minorities. Our aim was to determine whether evidence-based care, or mental health care found to be effective for treating mental disorders in white patients, is also effective for minorities.

2. Methods

We reviewed all studies of treatments for mental disorders among minorities.

3. Main Findings

We found that Latinos respond very well to evidence-based care for mental disorders. We found no evidence that a treatment found effective for white patients was either less effective or not effective for Latinos.

4. Significance for Policymakers, Communities, Advocacy Groups or Health Service Providers

This review would suggest that advocates should work to make sure that Latino patients with mental disorders obtain state-of-the-art, evidence-based care. Our findings suggest Latinos will respond well to evidence-based care.