

Impact of Acculturation on Cigarette Smoking Among Mexican-born Immigrants Living in Los Angeles County

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> PROBLEM

- One out of three immigrants who move from Mexico to California resides in Los Angeles County.
- Many immigrants undergo an acculturation process leading to the adoption of unhealthy behaviors such as cigarette smoking.

> OBJECTIVES

- To examine effects of acculturation on cigarette smoking among Mexican immigrants.
- To identify demographic correlates to guide the development of smoking prevention strategies in Los Angeles County.

> METHODS

- A population-based random-digit dial telephone health survey was conducted in 2003 among Los Angeles County residents aged 18 years and older.
- Of the 8167 survey participants, 1389 (17%) were born in Mexico and constituted the analysis sample.
- A psychometrically validated (Marin et al., 1987) five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Only Spanish" to "Only English" was used to assess acculturation.
- Five items used to assess acculturation were: languages read and spoken, languages used as a child, languages usually spoken at home, languages usually used for thinking, and languages usually used with friends.
- Mean scores on the five items were dichotomized into less acculturated (1 to < 3) or more acculturated (≥ 3 to 5) groups.
- Separate logistic regression models were conducted for females and males.
- Current cigarette smoking (item: do you currently smoke cigarettes?) was the outcome variable and acculturation was the primary independent variable, with age, education, income, years lived in US, marital status and job status included as covariates.

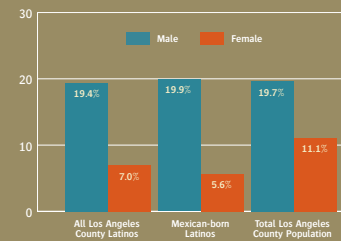
> RESULTS

- Among females, smoking prevalence of Mexican-born immigrants (5.6%) was somewhat lower than Los Angeles County Latinas (7.0%) and the general Los Angeles County female population (11.1%).
- Among males, smoking prevalence of Mexican-born immigrants (19.9%) was comparable to Los Angeles County Latinos (19.4%) and the general Los Angeles County male population (19.7%).
- Significant interactions between acculturation and education were found for females and males.
- Among females, higher acculturation was significantly associated with increased smoking prevalence for those with less than a high school degree (18.9% vs. 4.5%) and those with some college, college or graduate degrees (11.1% vs. 4.9%).
- Among males, higher acculturation was significantly associated with increased smoking prevalence for those with less than a high school degree (41.0% vs. 18.3%).
- Conversely, higher acculturation was significantly associated with lower smoking among males with some college, college or graduate degrees (9.4% vs. 27.9%).
- Acculturation was not significantly associated with increased or decreased smoking among female or male high school graduates.

> CONCLUSIONS

- Findings suggest that culturally relevant smoking prevention interventions targeted to Mexican-born immigrants living in Los Angeles County are needed.
- Ideally, the intervention strategies should consider the gender and education of the participants.
- Small sample sizes in the "more acculturated" and "cigarette smoker" categories led to unstable estimates of the acculturation effects, hence findings should be considered preliminary and replicated in larger samples.
- Future research extending acculturation studies to other high immigration populations is recommended.

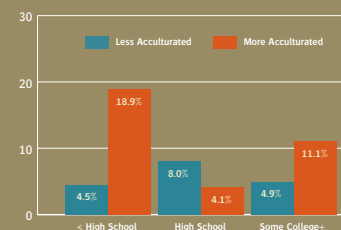
Figure 1. Prevalence of Current Cigarette Smoking Among Different Populations of Males and Females: Los Angeles County, 2003



Source: 2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey



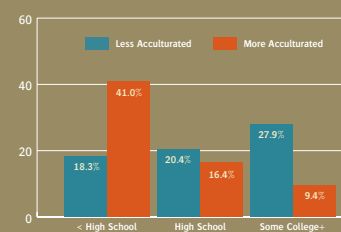
Figure 2. Effects of Acculturation on Cigarette Smoking Among Female Mexican-born Immigrants by Education: Los Angeles County, 2003



Source: 2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey



Figure 3. Effects of Acculturation on Cigarette Smoking Among Male Mexican-born Immigrants by Education: Los Angeles County, 2003



Source: 2003 Los Angeles County Health Survey

