Outline

- Immigrant Health Paradox
- Acculturation
- Data on Acculturation & Health
- Concluding Remarks
Top Immigrant Populations by U.S. State 2009-2013

http://wwwmigrationpolicyorgprogramsdatahubchartsstopimmigrantpopulationsusstate
IMMIGRANT HEALTH

What happens to their health after they migrate?
Immigrant Health Paradox

- Immigrants have better health profiles than their non-Hispanic White and US-born counterparts.

- Health paradox not consistent across specific immigrant subgroups.

- Health advantages deteriorate with increased duration in US.

Source: Cunningham et al., 2008; Escarce, Morales, & Rumbaut, 2006; Ruiz et al, 2013
Figure 1. Lifetime Prevalence Rates of Any Psychiatric Disorder According to Nativity and Ethnicity

Source: Alegría, Canino, Shrout et al. 2008, American Journal of Psychiatry
Cardiovascular Health in the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos

Source: Daviglus, Talavera et al. 2012, JAMA
Intense Debate

• Is the immigrant health paradox real or an artifact?
### Contemporary Explanations for the Immigrant Paradox

**Psychosocial and Behavioral**
- Paradox is true
- Specific cultural, psychosocial, and behavioral factors among immigrant communities lead to increased resiliency to confront disadvantage in relatively healthy ways
- Result in favorable health outcomes for immigrants (especially new arrivals) versus US natives.
- Increased stress exposure over time increases likelihood to engage in health risk behaviors (i.e., acculturation hypothesis).

**Sociological**
- Paradox is true, but largely explained by migrant selectivity theory.
- Healthy migrant hypothesis: selection for individuals who are healthier than the general population
- Salmon hypothesis: immigrants return to their country of origin when they become seriously ill and are therefore “statistically immortal”

**Methodological**
- Paradox is treated as false and nativity differences attributed to methodological factors.
- Misclassification of ethnicity on death certificates.
- Under-representation of ethnic groups in the census counts used to generate health statistics.
- Data artifacts related to immigrant versus native differences in response styles, stimulus familiarity, or construct bias.

ACCULTURATION

What happens after they migrate?
Acculturation

“changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences”

Source: Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010
Figure 1
Multidimensionality of Acculturation

HERITAGE
- Heritage language
- Heritage-culture foods
- Collectivism
- Interdependence
- Familism
- Country of origin

VALUES
- Individualism
- Independence

PRACTICES
- Receiving-society language
- Receiving-culture foods
- Receiving country

IDENTIFICATIONS


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Factors Involved in Acculturation Process

Source: Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010
ACCULTURATION & HEALTH
Place, Acculturation, and Depression in Latina/os

Fig. 1 Plot illustrating the interaction between acculturation and perceived density of Hispanics in neighborhoods in predicting depressive symptoms after controlling for demographic variables.

Source: Kwag et al., 2012, *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health*
BUT, ALSO
ACCULTURATION STRESS
Acculturation Stress

- a psychosocial stressor

- refers to the psychological distress/worry associated with the multidimensional process of acculturation

Source: Berry, Chun, Balls Organista, & Marín, 2003
Figure. Effect of Acculturation Stress on Insomnia Symptom Severity by Employment Status

Figure Legend: Effect of acculturation stress (continuous) on ISI (continuous) in analyses weighted for sampling weights and adjusted for age, sex, site and ethnicity with an employment term (dichotomous), an acculturation stress term and an acculturation stress X employment term (interaction).

Source: Alcantara et al., in preparation
AND TRANSNATIONAL TIES
Transnational Ties

• “development of frequent and enduring social, economic, political, or cultural ties between two or more countries”

Portes, 2003; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995
Predicted Probability of Current Smoker Status as a Function of Gender and Remittances

Source: Alcantara, Molina, & Kawachi, 2015, American Journal of Public Health
Prevalence of Past-Year MDE by Gender and Number of Visits

Source: Alcantara, Chen, & Alegria, 2015, Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology
Concluding Remarks

- Acculturation is not assimilation.
- Limits to the acculturation proxies.
- Need to use acculturation measures that reflect the current multidimensional conceptualization.
- Acculturation processes interact with other social and contextual factors to alter health risk.
- Immigrants actively maintain transnational ties.
Thank You

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