Demographic and Parenting Differences in the Niños Sanos, Familia Sana Communities
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Abstract
Objectives: To (1) examine baseline demographic characteristics and parenting dimensions of Niños Sanos, Familia Sana (NSFS) study participants in the intervention and comparison sites; and (2) understand the mediating factors to parenting.

Methods: Household level and individual data (demographic and children’ and mothers’ BMI) were collected at the baseline along with the ARSMA-II (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995) for each eligible child in the study and their mothers. The Parenting Dimensions Inventory (PDI), shortened edition (PDI-S) (Power, 2002) was used to assess nurturance, inconsistency, and follow-through.

Results: In bivariate analysis, we found significant differences between the communities in the percentage of mothers born in Mexico, the number of years of education, percentage of mothers who were educated in Mexico, the mothers’ work status, acculturation, and the nurturance, inconsistency and follow-through parenting dimensions. Multivariate regression analysis showed mothers’ years in the US and living in the intervention community as strong predictors of the follow-through dimension. Mothers’ years of education and being married were negatively associated with the inconsistency dimension. Mothers’ years of education, mothers’ years in the US, being married, and living in the intervention community were strong predictors of the nurturance dimension.

Conclusions and Implications: Communities in California’s Central Valley with over 80% Mexican-heritage families may still be significantly different in level of acculturation, education and parenting style.

Introduction

• The prevalence of childhood obesity is higher among American Indian, African American, and Mexican-American children (Ogden, et al., 2014).
• Research has indicated that parenting styles are associated with children’s weight-related outcomes (Stiedlens, Gerards, Thijis, De Vries, & Kremers, 2011).
• Research focused on reducing obesity in Mexican-American children has documented that culturally-adapted interventions show promising results (Barink, Gesell, Po’e, Escarfuller, & Tempesti, 2012; Slusser, Frankel, Robinson, Fischer, Cumberland, & Neumann, 2012).
• In order for the culturally-adapted interventions to be successful in engaging parent participants, they must be closely aligned with the population’s values and experiences (Castro, Barrera, & Holleran Steiker, 2010).

Methods

• Recruitment strategies included door to door, community meet and greet events, one-on-one (personal contacts), school events, and outreach during open market events.
• Demographic information was collected via the household survey and included: age of parent, participant years of education, place of birth, household size, total number of children in the household, marital status, main language spoken at home, percentage of life spent in the US, income, and work status.
• Acculturation was measured using the ARSMA-II which has an Anglo Orientation Subscale (AOS) and Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS) (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995).
• The Parenting Dimensions Inventory (PDI), shortened edition (PDI-S) (Power, 2002) was used to assess nurturance, inconsistency, and follow-through.
• Descriptive analysis was conducted for the school districts, and bivariate analyses (t-test and Chi-square tests) were completed to examine mean differences between the characteristics of interest across the two districts.
• Regression analysis was completed and multivariate models were built based on the model R2 and on the ground of plausibility of the predictors. Preliminary exploratory analysis for the definition of the model was preceded by analysis of Pearson’s correlation coefficients among all variables.

Results

Table 1. Bivariate Analysis of the Demographic Variables and Parenting Dimensions for the NSFS Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>FLUSD</th>
<th>GSPUSD</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth-Mexico</td>
<td>323.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Speaker %</td>
<td>319.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Education- Age</td>
<td>326.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Education</td>
<td>320.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Life Spent in the US</td>
<td>326.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married %</td>
<td>276.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s BMI</td>
<td>183.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and Conclusion

• Our findings are consistent with the literature that indicates that other factors such as social context and ethnic minority status rather than cultural affiliation, contribute to parenting styles.
• Findings have potential implications for designing culturally adapted and effective parenting-focused interventions to reduce obesity in Mexican-American populations.
• There is evidence suggesting that parenting-focused interventions can have positive impacts on parent feeding (Ontai, Williams, Lamp, & Smith, 2007) as well as on children’s weight (Gerards, Sleddens, Dagelie, De Vries, & Kremers, 2011).
• The current results suggest that application of a parenting-focused approach to preventing obesity in Mexican-American families need to be informed by an understanding of the cultural components that predict parent styles in relation to child obesity.
• Implications: Our findings suggest that in order to develop effective culturally relevant interventions research needs to explore the sociodemographic characteristics and the differences in parenting dimensions and behaviors in order to adapt any activities for parents.
• In addition, our findings suggest that practitioners who work with ethnically diverse populations need to be knowledgeable about the contextual and unique characteristics of the population.
• Limitations: Our study engaged largely rural and Mexican immigrant parents; thus our findings may not be generalizable to more urban and nationally diverse Latino groups.
• Future Research: We suggest that future research examine how parenting dimensions differ by the gender of their children.

References


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