

Presenter: Stephanie Alcala

Session & Time: Poster II

Room/Time: GLH / 2:30-3:30

Discipline: Global Public Health

Faculty Mentor: Michaela George

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: Mental Health, Culture, & College Success in First-Generation Latine College Students

Abstract:

Background

First-generation Latine college students face multiple challenges related to mental health, cultural expectations, and academic persistence. Cultural values such as familismo and stigma surrounding emotional expression may discourage help-seeking and contribute to distress. Using a mixed methods approach, this study aimed to examine how family cultural beliefs about mental health, familismo values, and comfort expressing stress influence willingness to seek emotional support and persistence in higher education among first-generation Latine students.

Methods

In partnership with Northern California college campuses, data was collected through online surveys and optional follow-up interviews. Participants were recruited between [Insert Dates]. Quantitative measures assessed cultural beliefs, comfort

expressing stress, help-seeking attitudes, and academic persistence using Likert-scale items. Qualitative interviews explored family expectations, communication patterns, and cultural influences on stress expression and support-seeking. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analyses, while qualitative data was examined using [Blank thematic] analysis.

Results

Preliminary results indicate that stronger familismo values and higher mental health stigma are associated with reduced comfort expressing stress and lower willingness to seek support. Students who reported open family communication demonstrated greater help-seeking intentions and stronger academic persistence. Interview themes highlighted the roles of family expectations, emotional suppression, and cultural stigma in shaping coping behaviors.

Conclusions

Improving mental health outcomes and academic persistence among first-generation Latine students may require culturally responsive support services that address family dynamics, reduce stigma, and promote open communication about stress. Strengthening culturally grounded mental health resources may enhance studentsâ€™ willingness to seek support and improve long-term educational outcomes.