



Mental Health Literacy and Self-Stigma in Latinos

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Introduction

People with mental illness are often subject to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, otherwise known as stigma (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). This stigma may be internalized through self-stigma, where a person may hold shame or other negative feelings regarding their mental condition and be less likely to seek help (Corrigan et al., 2007). Knowledge of mental health conditions and treatment, known as mental health literacy (MHL; Benuto et al., 2019), is associated with less mental illness social stigma possibly as a result of greater understanding of mental health conditions (Simões de Almeida et al., 2023). However, it is unclear how MHL may relate to self-stigma. Presently, we investigated the relationship between MHL and anticipated self-stigma

Hypothesis: Greater MHL would be associated with lower levels of self-stigma.

Methods

Participants:

400 Spanish-speaking Latino participants were recruited from Prolific. The sample was majority female and young adult (female $n = 207$; 51.7%, male $n = 193$; 48.3%, mean age = 26.9 years). Participants were born both within the U.S ($n = 72$; 18%) and outside of the U.S ($n = 328$; 82%).

Measures:

Self Stigma - Participants completed a modified Self Stigma of Depression Scale (SSDS; Barney et al., 2010). The scale was modified to assess self-stigma of mental illness in general

Methods (cont.)

Mental Health Literacy - Participants answered four yes/no questions adapted from the Mental Health Literacy Measure (MHLM; Jung et al., 2016). Questions assessed whether participants knew how to access services, obtain information on mental illness, and reach a suicide hotline.

Procedures: Questionnaires were completed in Spanish in a larger online survey on psychopathology and help-seeking (median completion time = 1 hour). Each participant was compensated \$20

Results

A simple linear regression indicated a significant overall model, $F(1, 397) = 4.72, p = .03, \text{adj. } R^2 = .009$. There was a negative relationship between mental health literacy and self-stigma.

Discussion

As we hypothesized, higher mental health literacy was related with lower self-stigma. Education programs that improve mental health literacy may be associated with less self-stigma; intervention research is needed to determine whether this is true. The present study's strengths include that it was sampled from the community Latinx/Hispanic population rather than a college campus, leading to greater external validity. However, further research is needed to determine if these findings extend to non-Latinx populations. Additionally, these cross-sectional results cannot be used to gauge whether greater MHL directly reduces self-stigma.

Acknowledgements / References

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	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> 95% C.I.	β	β 95% C.I.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	38.09	[35.21, 40.96]			26.07	<.001
Mental Health Literacy	-0.94	[-1.79, -.09]	-.11	[-0.21, -0.01]	-2.17	.030

