Birth Outcomes and Cultures of Pregnancy: Challenges Facing Mexican Immigrant Women and Their Families

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IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE CHANGE AND IMMIGRATION, HOW CAN WE CAPTURE AND RETAIN THE CULTURAL PROCESSES ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE BIRTH OUTCOMES AMONG IMMIGRANT WOMEN FROM MEXICO?
ANTHROPOLOGY OF PREGNANCY
Pregnancy as risk condition
Obstetricians and technology as authorities
Pregnancy: status quo relationships and responsibilities

AMERICAN APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY

E.g., Davis-Floyd 1992, 2004; Martin 2001; Rapp 2001; Fleuriet 2009a; Jordan 1993; Browner & Press 1997
MEXICAN APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY

- Pregnancy as normal
- Pregnancy as time of increased love and support
- Pregnant women and embodied knowledge and authority

E.g., Torres 2005; Browner & Press 1997; Sesia 1996; Guendelman et al. 2001; Fleuriet 2003; Jackson 2009; Cheney 2010
MEXICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN’S APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY
## METHODS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who</strong></td>
<td>226 Mexican-American and Mexican women</td>
<td>28 Mexican women; 6 health care providers</td>
<td>600 Mexican and Mexican American women; 80 Mexican and Mexican American women and household members</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Where</strong></td>
<td>Hidalgo and Cameron</td>
<td>Hidalgo and Cameron</td>
<td>Hidalgo and Cameron</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clinic Type</strong></td>
<td>Private; community; religious/alternative</td>
<td>Community; Religious/Alternative</td>
<td>Community; Religious/Alternative</td>
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<td><strong>What</strong></td>
<td>Preference of obstetrical care provider; barriers to care</td>
<td>Pregnancy, prenatal care and birth narratives</td>
<td>Status, stress, and birthweight; pregnancy narratives</td>
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<td><strong>How</strong></td>
<td>Survey; observations; informal interviews</td>
<td>Survey; in-depth interviews, participant observation</td>
<td>Survey; in-depth interviews</td>
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MEXICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN’S APPROACHES TO PREGNANCY

Fleuriet 2009a; 2009b; 2009c
Time → Cultural Approach to Pregnancy → Subjective Social Status → Psychosocial Stress → Birthweight

Status: community standing
Stress: perceived stress during pregnancy
Pregnancy anxiety
Experiences, stories → cultural approaches to pregnancy
Mexican and Mexican American women and their families

NEXT STEPS: SURVEY, INTERVIEWS, COMPARISONS
Research Directions: biomarkers, ethnography

Intervention Directions: increase support and decrease stress during pregnancy

BIRTH OUTCOMES AND CULTURES OF PREGNANCY: CHALLENGES FACING MEXICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES
- Research participants in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, Texas

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- Institute for Health Disparities, UTSA
- Culture and Policy Institute, UTSA

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