



LATINOS and ALCOHOL **Use/Abuse** REVISITED

Advances and Challenges for Prevention
and Treatment Programs



Melvin Delgado, PhD • Editor

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Editor

Latinos and Alcohol Use/Abuse Revisited: Advances and Challenges for Prevention and Treatment Programs

Latinos and Alcohol Use/Abuse Revisited: Advances and Challenges for Prevention and Treatment Programs has been co-published simultaneously as *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, Volume 23, Numbers 2/3 2005.

*Pre-publication
REVIEWS,
COMMENTARIES,
EVALUATIONS . . .*

“UNIQUE. . . . SIGNIFICANT. . . .
Examines current research, social policies, service delivery issues, and treatment and prevention initiatives associated with alcohol and other drug abuse among Latinos in the United States. The authors provide ample evidence that alcohol and other drug abuse is substantial and escalating, affecting Latinos across every age group, subgroup, community, and geographical area. One distinguishing characteristic of this book is the blending of empirical research, including quantitative and qualitative analysis, to support the need for cultural models of assessment, prevention, and treatment.”

Steven R. Applewhite, PhD, MSW
*Associate Professor
Graduate School of Social Work
University of Houston*

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REVIEWS, COMMENTARIES, EVALUATIONS . . .

“For anyone interested in building a culturally competent system of care for Latinos, THIS BOOK WILL PROVIDE INVALUABLE GUIDANCE. . . . Fills a substantial gap in our knowledge about alcohol use and abuse among subgroups of Latinos. . . . Brings together research and practice knowledge on a broad range of topics, including the most recent trends in alcohol use

and dependence among Latinos, service use and effectiveness, help-seeking behavior and barriers to treatment, the unmet needs of incarcerated Latinos, and ethnically sensitive interventions.”

Carol Coohy, PhD

*Associate Professor
University of Iowa School
of Social Work*



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- *Sexual Diversity Studies: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Abstracts (Formerly Gay & Lesbian Abstracts) provides comprehensive & in-depth coverage of the world's GLBT literature compiled by NISC & published on the Internet & CD-ROM* <<http://www.nisc.com>> 2002
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Latinos and Alcohol Use/Abuse Revisited: Advances and Challenges for Prevention and Treatment Programs

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: CONTEXT SETTING FOR LATINOS AND ALCOHOL

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
Melvin Delgado

Chapter 2: Brief Overview of Latino Demographics
in the Twenty-First Century: Implications for Alcohol-Related
Services 9
Celina Miranda

SECTION 2: PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Chapter 3: Seeking Care for Alcohol Problems: Patterns of Need
and Treatment Among Mexican-Origin Adults
in Central California 29
William A. Vega
William M. Sribney

Chapter 4: Alcohol Use Among Dominican-Americans:
An Exploration 53
Annecy Baez

Chapter 5: Onset of Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among Latino Gang Members: A Preliminary Analysis <i>Mario De La Rosa</i> <i>Douglas Rugh</i>	67
Chapter 6: Incarcerated Latinas and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse: Assessment and Intervention Considerations <i>Betty Garcia</i>	87
Chapter 7: Ahora le Voy a Cuidar Mis Nietos: Rural Latino Grandparents Raising Grandchildren of Alcohol and Other Drug Abusing Parents <i>Karen Bullock</i>	107
Chapter 8: Creating Circulos del Cuidado for AOD Latino Juvenile Offenders <i>Edward Pabon</i>	131
Chapter 9: Alcohol Use Among Adult Puerto Rican Injection Drug Users <i>Lena M. Lundgren</i> <i>LaChelle Capalla</i> <i>Linsey Ben-Ami</i>	149
Chapter 10: Substance Abuse Prevention for High-Risk Youth: Exploring Culture and Alcohol and Drug Use <i>Lori K. Holleran</i> <i>Margaret A. Taylor-Seehafer</i> <i>Elizabeth C. Pomeroy</i> <i>James Alan Neff</i>	165
Chapter 11: Pentecostal Religion, Asset Assessment and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse: A Case Study of a Puerto Rican Community in Massachusetts <i>Melvin Delgado</i> <i>Michael Rosati</i>	185

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 12: Cross-Cutting Themes and Recommendations <i>Melvin Delgado</i>	205
---	-----

Index	213
-------	-----

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Melvin Delgado, PhD, is Professor of Social Work at Boston University School of Social Work and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He has published over 125 journal articles and chapters in the areas of social work in Latino communities, substance abuse prevention, natural support systems in communities of color, and social work practice with Latino elders, and has written or edited nine books. Dr. Delgado's current focus is on establishing the Boston University Social Work Minority Research Center for Research and Training in Urban Communities of Color.

SECTION 1: CONTEXT SETTING FOR LATINOS AND ALCOHOL

Chapter 1

Introduction

Melvin Delgado, PhD

SUMMARY. The twenty-first century promises to challenge the field of alcohol research, treatment, and prevention in addressing culturally competent practice. The Latino community in the United States serves as an excellent example for measuring how far the field has progressed in meeting these challenges and identifying the work that remains to be accomplished. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

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The field of drug abuse has received considerable national and international attention over the past twenty years. However, in this country much of this attention has focused on the role of heroin, cocaine, and crack within inner cities (Delgado, 2001; NIDA, 2003). Alcohol, with minor exceptions, has not benefited from this increased attention and funding even though its deleterious effects as measured in deaths, health problems, and financial costs are astronomical to the nation as a whole.

It has been approximately seven years since the publication of the first book that I edited entitled *Alcohol Use/Abuse Among Latinos: Issues and Examples of Culturally Competent Services*. This book was well received in the field in both scholarly and practices arenas (IDEA Prevention, 2001; Mayers, 2000; Pereira, 2000; Ruiz, 1999). This volume, like the previous one, is intended to provide an update on the latest findings and thinking on the subject of alcohol use and abuse within the Latino community in the United States, and in so doing, set the stage for what can be expected in the next decade of the twenty-first century.

This volume brings together what is arguably the most talented group of scholars on the subject and once again examines the topic from a variety of different perspectives. Each of these articles seeks to provide the reader with valuable insights into the challenges and rewards of embracing culturally competent approaches towards work in the Latino community. Every effort has been made in these articles to be specific to a particular Latino subgroup. Although it is politically advantageous to categorize all Latino subgroups into one group and label them "Latino/a," this method does a tremendous disservice to the field in better meeting their unique set of needs.

There have been dramatic changes nationally and globally since the turn of the century and millenium and this has naturally impacted on Latinos and the field of alcohol treatment services. These social, demographic, economic, political and technological changes have served to reinforce the importance and need for the field to continue its progress towards developing culturally competent research, prevention and treatment, and to do so with an understanding of the long road ahead of us (Delgado, 2002; White & McGovern, 2002).

The Latino community in the United States has continued its dramatic increase in numbers and diversity and is expected to continue to do so well into this century with Latinos having surpassed African-Americans as this nation's largest "minority" group since the latest U.S. Census Bureau counting. According to a recent Pew Hispanic Center report (Suro & Passel, 2003) the Latino population in the United States

will increase from 35 million in 2000 (13 percent of all U.S. residents) to 60 million in 2020 (18 percent of all U.S. residents).

A young population and an increase in numerical representation may bring with it mixed outcomes for this community. From an advertising point of view, the Latino community in this country represents a largely untapped market. It not only has the “right” demographic picture or profile, but as a result of residential segregation, we are a market that is segmented and thus more attractive for marketers of products and services. Maxwell and Jacobson’s comments over fifteen years ago are very relevant today (1989, p.ix): “Today, companies are tripping over each other in their excitement about ‘discovering’ the Hispanic market. They’re hiring Hispanic ad agencies, advertising in Spanish-language media, and trying to forge ties with the Hispanic community by sponsoring events ranging from festivals to scholarship banquets to soccer games. But the importance of the Hispanic market is old news for the alcohol and tobacco industries, which targeted Hispanic consumers for extensive—and profitable—advertising and promotional campaigns long before it became the fashionable thing to do.”

In 2002, alcohol advertisers, for example, spent over \$23 million to place advertisements in twelve or fifteen television programs favored by Latino youth (Roybal-Allard, 2003). In 1998 the top three domestic beer companies in the United States spent a combined total of almost \$38 million on Latino-targeted advertisement (California-Mexico Health Initiative, 2002). Thus, increased presence and recognition brings with it increased targeting by companies. “Merchants of Death” have an uncanny ability to recognize opportunity and are not afraid to act accordingly in search of a generous profit!

Although Latinos are less likely than non-Latinos to report excessive alcohol use, Latino adolescents present a more disturbing picture. In 2000, among 12th graders, 31 percent of the Latino adolescents reported heavy drinking compared to 35 percent for white, non-Latinos (Pew Hispanic Center, 2002). They represent a potential growth market from a beer and other alcohol industry perspective with prodigious health, economic, and social consequences for this community.

This book consists of twelve chapters and is divided into three sections: (1) Context Setting for Latinos and Alcohol; (2) Prevention and Treatment; and (3) Summary of Prevention and Treatment Implications. Each of these sections is treated as their own distinct entity. However, as the reader will quickly find out, these sections and the subjects they address are highly interrelated on a daily basis in the field. The articles in this volume cover all of the major geographical sectors of this

country. However, urban areas may be perceived as disproportionately represented. Nevertheless, approximately 85 to 90 percent of all Latinos residing in this country do in fact reside in urban areas.

The article by Ms. Miranda has been purposefully selected to start out the volume by providing a socio-demographic foundation, and does an excellent job of laying out Latino demographic trends and the implications they will have for the way we conceptualize the field of alcohol treatment, prevention, and research. The tremendous diversity that exists within the Latino community will manifest itself in the need for the field of alcohol services and research to be ever more specific about whom is being identified as "Latino/a" and how their socio-demographic characteristics and migration history to this country will influence service provision and eventual utilization.

Drs. Vega and Sribney have focused their expertise in better understanding the help-seeking patterns of Mexican-origin adult immigrants and Mexican-Americans living in central California. The high number of Mexican immigrants to the state of California brings with it new dynamics in how best to outreach and serve the needs of this rapidly growing population. The important role help-seeking patterns play in who and when Latinos eventually find their way into programs cannot be overly estimated.

Dr. Baez, Dr. De La Rosa and Mr. Rugh have each addressed a population that we will no doubt be in greater contact within this decade. Dr. Baez has focused on Dominican youth, a Latino group that has experienced dramatic demographic increases, particularly in New York City, within the past decade. Dominican youth bring with them many of the same issues facing their Cuban and Puerto Rican counterparts within the United States, but also bring a unique set of issues that effectively makes them substantially different from their Caribbean counterparts. Dr. De La Rosa and Mr. Rugh, in turn, present on preliminary findings from an ethnographic study of Puerto Rican/Dominican male gang members in a large New England city. The subject of gangs and the role of alcohol and other drugs has only recently started to receive the attention it deserves in the professional literature. These authors specifically focus their article on the patterns of alcohol and other drug initiation, with far ranging implications for prevention and early intervention.

This nation's prisons and jails are a testament to the role of alcohol and other drug abuse in criminal behavior (Valle & Humphrey, 2002). Dr. Garcia's article brings into focus a population group that is increasing in representation but very much overlooked in the professional liter-

ature—namely, the incarcerated Latina. Women make up the fastest growing sector of this nation’s incarceration population, and Latinas make up a significant portion of this group alongside African-American women. The issues and needs of Latina inmates brings with it a set of challenges and rewards unparalleled in the field of alcohol treatment.

Dr. Bullock, too, has focused on Latinas but approached the subject from the viewpoint of caregivers—more specifically rural Latina grandmothers in a southern state. The role of grandmothers within the Latino culture is very much revered. They are often called upon to provide a wide range of expressive and instrumental care regardless of their own individual circumstances. However, they are now being thrust into roles that are unprecedented because of the impact of alcohol and other drug abuse in their families.

There are many other population subgroups, however, that have not seen a tremendous amount of attention in the professional literature. Dr. Pabon, for example, has written about Latino juvenile offenders and the importance of culture-specific programming to meet their alcohol and other drug abuse-specific needs. Latino youth within the juvenile justice system will in all likelihood eventually wind up in adult correctional systems if their unique needs are left unaddressed. This career path, so to speak, brings with it incredible implications for family structure within Latino communities. Dr. Lundgren, Capalla and Ben-Ami have focused their attention on the polydrug user, in this instance, alcohol use among Puerto Rican heroin injection drug users in a large New England city. The days of abusing just one drug seem quite distant, bringing new challenges to treating the polydrug using Latino. However, the role of alcohol in the life of heroin injection drug users is poorly understood because of common perceptions that heroin users, in this case Puerto Ricans, are primarily only interested in one drug—namely, heroin. Nevertheless, Dr. Lundgren and colleagues report on findings that will prove intriguing to the reader.

Dr. Holleran and colleagues, in turn, provide a prevention model with specific reference to alcohol and other drug use among Latino youth in the Southwest. This article uplifts the importance of an Orthogonal model of acculturation and highlights an innovative video as a method in prevention programs. The subject of acculturation and the role it plays within the Latino community has been controversial, particularly when examined within the light that newcomers to this country are far healthier than those born here or after they have been here a considerable of time. Namely, entering this country can be detrimental to your health. Dr. Holleran and colleagues shed new light on this debate.

Delgado and Rosati's article is on religion and the potential role it can have in the development of prevention and treatment programs in this field. There is general agreement in the field that natural support systems must be seriously considered in the development of any culturally competent approach towards better addressing the needs of Latinos in the United States, and religion certainly is a central component of this construct (Delgado, 1996). The authors have specifically targeted Pentecostalism because of its increased popularity within the Latino community in the United States. Finally, Delgado provides the reader with a summary and overview of the key themes and issues raised by the authors of this volume.

CONCLUSION

Special issues regardless of their foci have an important place in the professional literature. They provide an editor with an unusual ability to bring together expertise that does not reside within any one individual, regardless of their abilities and wisdom. Collectively, however, individual expertise can help form a more complete picture of a complex phenomenon such as alcohol use and abuse among Latinos, and how best to provide valuable services. There is little question that special issues bring a certain focus on issues that generally get overlooked in the process of planning and delivering services in the field of alcohol and other drug abuse.

This volume has the benefits of focusing on particular group (Latinos/as). Yet, the subject matter defies limiting it to twelve articles, regardless of their breadth and the level of expertise of the authors. The reader, I believe, will be able to take many of the recommendations raised in this volume and bring them to fruition in their respective communities. I sincerely hope that the reader has as much enjoyment in reading this volume as I have had in putting it together! It is fitting to end this introduction to this volume with a quote from the Hispanic Pew Center (Suro & Passel, 2003, p.9): "Regardless of whether immigration flows from Latin America increase[s], decreases or stay the same, a great change in the composition of the Hispanic population is underway. . . . One prediction about second-generation Latinos, however, seems safe: Given their numbers, their future will be a matter of national interest."

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