



Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Depression and Opioid Use among Hispanic and Latinx

Individuals with Opioid Misuse

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected vulnerable populations and exacerbated health and social disparities. Rates of opioid use disorder (OUD) are rising in the U.S., but opioid use among Hispanic/Latinx communities is still relatively understudied. Separate lines of research have previously documented significant impacts of the pandemic on individuals with OUD and Hispanic/Latinx populations, but additional studies are required to understand the effects of the pandemic on Hispanic/Latinx individuals who report opioid misuse. The current study examines the impacts of the pandemic and how it is associated with depressive symptoms and opioid use among Hispanic/Latinx individuals. **Methods:** Participants reporting past-year opioid misuse were enrolled in an online study (N=126). Participants completed questionnaires related to the impacts of the pandemic, depressive symptoms, and opioid use. Analyses were limited to individuals who identified as Hispanic/Latinx (n=50). Descriptive statistics characterized the sample and independent linear regression models, accounting for age and gender, examined how concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic predicted depressive symptoms and past 30-day prescription opioid and heroin use. **Results:** A substantial proportion of the sample reported that they had COVID-19 (44%), that someone close to them had COVID-19 (24%), or that someone close to them died related to COVID-19 (20%). Some participants reported that the pandemic impacted their housing (14%) or access to healthcare services (10-18%). Overall concerns about the pandemic were positively associated with depressive symptoms ($B=0.27$, $p<0.001$) but not prescription opioid ($B=-0.06$, $p=0.603$) or heroin ($B=-0.02$, $p=0.900$) use in the past 30-days. **Conclusion:** Findings from this study highlight the relationship between concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and depressive symptoms among Hispanic/Latinx individuals reporting past-year opioid misuse. Future work should mitigate the effects of the pandemic on Hispanic/Latinx individuals who use opioids.