

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Depression and Opioid Use Among Hispanic and Latinx Individuals with Opioid Misuse

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Background

- 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 documented impacts of the pandemic on individuals with OUD and Hispanic/Latinx populations.
- Additional studies are needed to understand the effects of the pandemic on Hispanic/Latinx individuals who report opioid misuse.

Objective

- Examine the impacts of the pandemic and how it is associated with depressive symptoms and opioid use among Hispanic/Latinx individuals reporting past-year opioid misuse.

Methods

- **Participants**
 - N=50 Hispanic/Latinx individuals with past-year opioid misuse enrolled via Amazon's MTurk and completed survey questions via RedCAP.
- **Measures**
 - COVID-19 Survey: Assesses impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9): Assesses depressive symptoms.
 - Rapid Opioid Dependence Screen (RODS): Assesses opioid use problems.
 - Substance Use Questionnaire: Assess past 30-day prescription opioid and heroin use.
- **Data Analysis**
 - Descriptive statistics characterized sample.
 - Linear regression models examined how pandemic concerns, controlling for age and gender, predicted depressive symptoms and opioid use.

Participant Characteristics

Demographic and Clinical Characteristics (N=50)

	M (SD) / N (%)
Age	36.16 (7.43)
Gender	
Man	30 (60%)
Woman	20 (40%)
Years of Education	14.65 (4.23)
Annual Household Income	67,920.50 (82240.60)
Opioid Use Problems (RODS) (range=0-7)	6.02 (1.30)
Depressive Symptoms (PHQ-9) (range=0-27)	16.04 (5.04)
Past 30-day Prescription Opioid Use	5.24 (5.62)
Past 30-day Heroin Use	6.82 (7.94)

Results

Depressive Symptoms by Pandemic-related Concerns and Gender



Descriptive Statistics on the Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic

	M (SD) / N (%)
Self had COVID-19	22 (44%)
Someone close had COVID-19	12 (24%)
Someone close died of COVID-19	10 (20%)
Living situation impacted by pandemic	7 (14%)
Pandemic impacted pattern of drug use	7 (14%)
Pandemic impacted access to drugs/alcohol	7 (14%)
Pandemic impacted SUD treatment	5 (10%)
Pandemic impacted access to mental health services	9 (18%)
Pandemic impacted access to other health/social services	45 (90%)
Overall concerns related to COVID pandemic (range=11-55)	39.59 (7.08)

Conclusions

Among Hispanic/Latinx individuals reporting opioid misuse in the last 12 months:

Many reported challenges related to the pandemic (e.g., changes in living situation, drug use, access to treatment services and healthcare).

There was positive relationship between concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and depressive symptoms.

There was no relationship between concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and recent opioid use.

- Limitations include sampling plan, small sample size, and when data were collected (i.e., 2020-2021).
- Future research should examine continued effect of pandemic on Hispanic/Latinx individuals who use opioids.
- Future work should mitigate the effects of the pandemic on Hispanic/Latinx individuals who use opioids, addressing depression and mental health.

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