

Quantitative Analyses

19. A range of services will be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population, considering gender and culture

Culture

Latino Americans have become the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States. The Latino population increased by 37% from 1990 to 2000, which was six times faster than the rest of the U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000a). Simultaneous with these growing numbers have come growing concerns that have outpaced the difficulties experienced by other minority groups. In 1999, 23% of Latino families had incomes below the poverty level compared with only 7% of non-Latino families. In addition, 31% of all Latino American children in the U.S. lived in poverty, (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000b). Latino adolescents have been shown to have the highest school dropout and retention rates of all ethnic groups in the U.S. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000a) and 16% of Latino high school students reported being in a physical fight requiring medical treatment during the preceding 30 days, compared with 10% of non-Latino white students (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 1992). Brener, Krug, and Simon (2000) reported a decrease in fighting for African-American and European-American youths over time; however, no such decrease was reported for Latino American youths. Finally, Block (1988) demonstrated that the homicide rate for Latino youths ages 15-24 was approximately 9 times the rate for European-American youths. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among Latino adolescents and young adults.

Such a variety of stressors pertaining to discrimination and social inequality have been shown to impact social and psychological factors that in turn, contribute to a variety of problem behaviors including delinquency. (Samaniego and Gonzales, 1999).

The intent of the NEW VISTAS program was to recruit community agencies reflective of and responsive to the community's ethnic diversity. A Research Advisory Panel was recruited to review evaluation procedures to improve their cultural sensitivity. In addition, key program delivery elements were implemented in order to maximize bi-lingual and bi-cultural competence with interventions: (a) neighborhood supervision teams comprised of gateway agency staff to develop case plans for the client families linking them to appropriate services and monitoring their progress; (b) family coaches who provided case management and client tracking and provided support (e.g., home visits, transportation, and "coaching") to the family in an effort to meet the goals of their case plan; and (c) alcohol, drug, and mental health treatment planners (i.e., licensed clinicians) conducted in-depth family assessments of substance abuse and dual diagnosis issues, worked with supervision team members to develop a treatment plan, and provided case reviews.

Latino Americans have become the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States.

With growing numbers has come growing problems, such as poverty, school dropout, and delinquency.

NEW VISTAS implemented a variety of culturally sensitive services in order to maximize treatment effects for Latino American youths.

Quantitative Analyses

19. A range of services will be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population considering gender and culture (cont.)

In order to examine the relative impact of the NEW VISTAS program on Latino Americans, paired independent samples *t*-tests were conducted comparing Latino American and European American youths on several key indicators of change in behavioral problems and strengths from Intake to Exit.

Figure 19a. Significance of Change by Ethnicity

	Latino American	European American
Item	Significance	Significance
Interpersonal Strength	No	Yes
Family Involvement	No	Yes
Intrapersonal Strength	Yes	Yes
School Functioning	Yes	Yes
Affective Strength	No	No
Internalizing Behavior	Yes	Yes
Externalizing Behavior	Yes	Yes

Figure 19a displays these results. For both Latino American ($n = 81$) and European American ($n = 20$) groups, all behavioral strengths increased from Intake to Exit and all behavioral problems decreased from Intake to Exit. However, these decreases were not always significant. For both groups, Intrapersonal Strength (i.e., outlook on his competence and accomplishments) and School Functioning decreased significantly, while Internalizing and Externalizing decreased significantly. Neither Interpersonal Strength (i.e., ability to control emotions in social situations), nor Family Involvement improved significantly for Latino American youths, though these strengths improved for European Americans. Affective Strength (i.e., the ability to accept affection from others and express affection towards others) did not improve for either group.

Overall, these results indicate that outcomes improved significantly for both groups, particularly with regards to behavioral problems. However, not as many behavioral strengths increased for Latino American youths. There are several explanations for this result, including (a) services were not equally effective for Latino Americans and European Americans despite efforts, (b) strengths measured are not culturally sensitive, that is, these factors are not strengths in the Latino American culture, and (c) the measurement of strengths has not been tested as thoroughly with Latino Americans, and norms may be unfairly applied to this population.

Behavioral problems decreased from Intake to Exit for both Latino Americans and European Americans.

Though all behavioral strengths increased from Intake to Exit for both Latino Americans and European Americans, more increases were significant for European Americans.

Overall, these results indicate that outcomes improved significantly for both groups.

Quantitative Analyses

19. A range of services will be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population considering gender and culture (cont.)

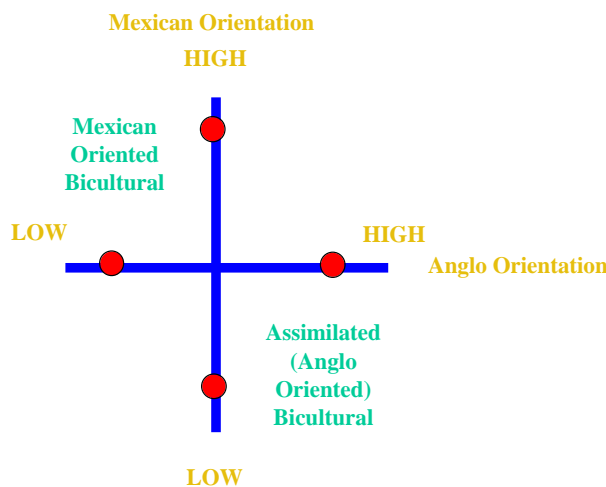
NEW VISTAS sought to better understand the risk and protective factors not only between Latino Americans and European Americans involved in the juvenile justice system, but among Mexican American adolescents themselves.

The task of addressing the problems of Latino Americans has often been complicated by the lack of clarity regarding the types of individuals encompassed by the broad “Latino American/Hispanic” label. Even when youths share a common ethnic background, their responses to their environment may be mediated by their acculturation status. Many bicultural youths are conflicted in the process of deciding whether to adhere to the norms and values of the American society or to those of their parents’ country of origin (Sommers, Fagan & Baskin, 1993).

In order to determine whether services would be effective for youths at all levels of acculturation status, the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II) was implemented at program Exit. The ARSMA-II is one of the earliest and most widely established measures of acculturation. It was designed specifically for use with Mexican Americans but has some utility for Latino groups in general.

The ARSMA-II provides two scores indicating the degree of cultural adherence to Anglo (Anglo Orientation Scale Score) and Mexican culture (Mexican Orientation Scale Score). The two scores are then subtracted from each other to yield a score indicating acculturation level. Figure 19b illustrates these dimensions of the ARSMA-II. Rather than assess cultural values, the ARSMA-II assesses the following cultural behaviors: language use and preference, ethnic identity and classification, cultural heritage and ethnic behavior, and ethnic interaction. In terms of the scale’s reliability as an instrument, alpha coefficients were .83 for the Anglo Orientation Scale and .88 for the Mexican Orientation Scale (Cueller, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995).

Figure 19b. Dimensions of the ARSMA-II



Acculturation is the degree to which youths’ behaviors and values incorporate the majority culture.

Considering individual differences within ethnic groups, acculturation is an important factor.

By implementing a measure of acculturation, differences in NEW VISTAS program impacts could be examined by level of acculturation.

Quantitative Analyses

19. A range of services will be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population considering gender and culture (cont.)

In order to examine the relative impact of the NEW VISTAS program within the Latino American population, paired independent samples *t*-tests were conducted comparing Mexican American youths of different acculturation levels, as measured by the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II, on several key indicators of change in behavioral problems and strengths from Intake to Exit.

Figure 19c. Significance of Change by Acculturation

	Mexican Oriented	Biculturally Oriented	Anglo Oriented
Item	Significance	Significance	Significance
Interpersonal Strength	No	No	No
Family Involvement	No	No	Yes
Intrapersonal Strength	Yes	No	No
School Functioning	Yes	No	No
Affective Strength	No	No	Yes
Internalizing Behavior	No	Yes	Yes
Externalizing Behavior	No	Yes	Yes

Figure 19c displays these results. Results differed by level of acculturation (i.e., Mexican Oriented, $n = 31$; Biculturally Oriented, $n = 31$; Anglo Oriented, $n = 24$). The Mexican Oriented group improved on two measures of strength, Intrapersonal Strength (i.e., outlook on his competence and accomplishments) and School Functioning. The Biculturally Oriented group improved on the two measures of problem behaviors, Internalizing and Externalizing behaviors. The Anglo Oriented group improved on the most number of behaviors, including Family Involvement, Affective Strength, Internalizing Behavior, and Externalizing Behavior.

Overall, these results indicate that while outcomes improved for all three groups, youths who were Anglo oriented in their language use and cultural behavior had significant outcomes across more dimensions. There are several explanations for this result, including (a) services were not equally effective for youths at different levels of acculturation, (b) strengths measured are not sensitive to those youths who are more Mexican oriented in their cultural behaviors, (c) small sample sizes reduced power to find significance, and (d) measurement of acculturation and behavior was not adequate for more Mexican oriented youths. It should be noted that the ARSMA-II focuses on behaviors of youths, not on the cultural values a youth holds.

The significance of change in behaviors from Intake to Exit differed by acculturation level.

While outcomes improved for all three groups, youths who were Anglo oriented had significant outcomes across more dimensions.

Quantitative Analyses

19. A range of services will be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population considering gender and culture (cont.)

Gender

While national violence and criminal offense trends are decreasing overall, rates for females are increasing. For example, between 1989 and 1993 juvenile arrests increased 23% for females and 11% for males (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996). In addition, Snyder (1998) reports data that showing that although female referrals for delinquency were only 23% of the total, their arrests had increased by 97% between 1980 and 1995, whereas boys referrals had increased by 46% in the same time period. Though still a minority of youths involved in crime, the gap between males and females is decreasing, thus increasing interest in how to better understand this population of delinquents.

Most of the research on delinquency has been based on male samples. Only recently have juvenile justice programs been focused on better understanding the nature of offending patterns for girls and what types of interventions best support females. This is important, because female delinquency may be associated with different types and/or levels of risk factors than male delinquency (Funk, 1999; Hoyt & Scherer, 1998). Thus, developmental pathway models developed to explain male delinquency are insufficient to explain girls' delinquency (Funk, 1999; Hoyt & Scherer, 1998). It appears as if many risk factors, such as familial criminal involvement, peer relationships, and academic achievement, are important for both girls and boys. However, the aspects of each factor that affect a girl may be different. For example, studies have found that more female delinquents are raised in a single parent home than male delinquents (Calhoun, Jurgens, & Chen, 1993; Morris, 1964). In addition, females in detention are more likely to have been sexually abused than males (68.3% versus 19.1%; Mason, Zimmerman, & Evans, 1998; 64% versus 13%; Miller, 1993). Girls are also more likely to have run away from home than males (73% versus 38%; McCormack, Janus, & Burgess, 1986).

NEW VISTAS implemented intervention services specifically to target female offenders and planned evaluation efforts to systematically investigate the effects of program interventions on their behavior. Female participants received a variety of gender appropriate services, including (a) life skills training including health, parenting, skill development, decision making, refusal skills, risk and protection, violence and personal safety, career and life planning, leadership and community action; (b) matching females with community mentors; (c) therapeutic recreational and cultural activities through an after school program designed to engage participants and help keep them away from alcohol, drugs, and violent behavior offering them constructive alternatives to release their anger and express their emotions; (d) health care services that provided females with necessary assistance with many gender specific health issues; and (e) service linkages provided through female family coaches who established linkages with existing female-specific services.

Females have been increasingly involved with the juvenile justice system both in terms of the type and severity of criminal offenses.

Females differ from males in the development of these delinquent behaviors and thus, require gender appropriate interventions .

The NEW VISTAS program implemented gender appropriate services in order to attend to the specific needs of both females and males in the program.

Quantitative Analyses

19. A range of services will be developed to meet the needs of a diverse population considering gender and culture (cont.)

In order to examine the relative impact of the NEW VISTAS program on females, paired independent samples t-tests were conducted comparing females and males on several key indicators of change in behavioral problems and strengths from Intake to Exit.

Figure 19d. Significance of Change by Gender

	Females	Males
Item	Significance	Significance
Interpersonal Strength	No	No
Family Involvement	Yes	No
Intrapersonal Strength	No	Yes
School Functioning	Yes	Yes
Affective Strength	No	No
Internalizing Behavior	Yes	Yes
Externalizing Behavior	Yes	Yes

Figure 19d displays these results. For both female ($n = 45$) and male ($n = 60$) groups, all behavioral strengths increased from Intake to Exit and all behavioral problems decreased from Intake to Exit. However, these decreases were not always statistically significant. For both groups, School Functioning, Internalizing and Externalizing behaviors improved significantly. For both males and females, neither Interpersonal Strength (i.e., ability to control emotions in social situations), nor Affective strength improved significantly. Though Family Involvement significantly increased for females, it did not for males and though Intrapersonal Strength (i.e., outlook on his competence and accomplishments) significantly increased for males, it did not for females.

Overall, these results indicate that outcomes improved significantly for both groups, particularly with regards to behavioral problems. It appears that outcomes improved for both groups, though areas of improvement differed somewhat by gender. This is consistent with the extant literature, which has found that males and females have different experiences, particularly with regards to delinquency and risk factors associated with delinquent acts.

Types of behaviors that changed significantly from Intake to Exit differed by gender.

Though both groups had significant decreases in behavior problems, they differed in the types of behavioral strengths that improved.

Overall, these results indicate that outcomes improved significantly for both groups.