

# Relationship Between Acculturative Stress and Anxiety in Adolescents Immigrants

## Background

- Anxiety disorders are mental disorders that are characterized by excessive worry and fear that is persistent, irrational, uncontrollable, and may cause distress or impairment in everyday life (WHO, 2017).
- Immigrant adolescents are at a higher risk of developing anxiety disorders due to acculturative stress (Sirin et al., 2019).
- Acculturative stress is defined as psychological and social stress associated with an immigrant or ethnic minority adjusting to a new country's system of beliefs, values, and norms (Da Silva et al., 2017).

## PICO Question

- Are first-generation adolescents, age 13-19 years old, who experience high levels of acculturative stress more likely to develop anxiety disorders?

## Design/Sample

- Focused on analyzing eleven articles including five case-control studies and six case reports regarding acculturative stress and anxiety disorders. Studies ranged from small-scale studies with focused groups to large-scales with thousand participants. The articles were published between 2008-2021, indicating recent evidence.

## Analysis

- Analysis across all studies suggested that greater symptoms of anxiety were observed among first- and second-generation youth compared to the third-gen due to the acculturation-related, intergenerational conflict and language differences with parents as the primary source of stress (Perreira et al., 2019)
- The results also indicate the imperative role of social support in first-generation adolescents and serves as a protective function against the acculturative stress they face (Katsiaficas et al., 2013).
- Limitations: small sample size, limited or not diverse ethnicity population, either cover a small or broad age range.

## Results

Title of Article	Level of Evidence	Findings
Acculturation stress, anxiety disorders, and alcohol dependence in a select population of young adult Mexican Americans	III	Results showed there is a significant association between acculturation stress anxiety disorders.
Immigration and Stress: The relationship between Patients' Acculturative Stress and Young Children's Symptoms	III	Results showed high levels of acculturative stress in immigrant parents is strongly correlated with higher levels of anxiety symptoms in the child. There is no significant difference in anxiety symptoms between immigrant children and non-immigrant children. Immigrants reported higher levels of acculturative stress than non-immigrants.
The Relationship between Mental Health, Acculturative Stress, and Academic Performance in a Latino Middle School Sample	III	The results of the study indicate that there is a correlation between the students' symptoms of internalizing mental health problems and acculturative stress levels, and these in turn have an inverse relationship with academic performance
Adult attachment, acculturation, acculturative stress, and psychological distress of first-generation latinx immigrants	III	The findings from the questionnaires and analysis showed that first generation immigrants with high adult attachment insecurity were likely to have lower acculturation level, which then was associated with more acculturative stress and greater psychological distress.
The Role of Acculturative Stress on Mental Health Symptoms for Immigrants adolescents: A longitudinal Investigation.	III	Results showed acculturative stress as a critical component of mental health for urban immigrant youth. Overall, the results of this study highlight the degree to which children of immigrants are at risk for psychological vulnerabilities as a result of acculturative stress during the high school years.
Association of Acculturative Stress, Islamic Practices, and Internalizing Symptoms Among Arab American Adolescents.	IV	In a study done on 88 Arab American adolescents (ages 11-18) by a health clinic in large Midwestern city, results showed that adolescents' reported acculturative stress was positively associated with their reported internalizing symptoms. The findings also suggested that first- and second-generation adolescents reported similar levels of acculturative stress and internalizing symptoms.
Interpersonal mediators linking acculturation stressor to subsequent internalizing symptoms and self-esteem into latino adolescents	IV	Results showed that there is a significant cross-sectional relationship with internalizing symptoms and acculturation stressors in adolescents. Plus, acculturation stressors are strongly related to depression and anxiety.
Depression and Anxiety among First-Generation Immigrant Latino Youth: Key Correlates and Implications for Future Research	IV	The study showed that migration stressors increased the risk of both depressive symptoms and anxiety. Compared to documented adolescents, undocumented adolescents were at greater risk of anxiety, and children in mixed-status families were at greater risk of anxiety and marginally greater risk of depressive symptoms.
Stress and Resilience: Key Correlates of Mental Health and Substance Use in the Hispanic Community Health Study of Latino Youth	IV	The results showed that greater children's acculturative stress was associated with depression/anxiety symptoms. Greater symptoms of anxiety were observed among first- and second-generation youth compared to the third-generation.
Understanding the role of social support in trajectories of mental health symptoms for immigrant adolescents	IV	The study results suggests that there may be a relationship between acculturative stress and internalization of anxiety and depressive symptoms. The study also found that providing social support can improve and prevent acculturative stress and internalization of anxiety and depressive symptoms among immigrant adolescents.
Mediators of the Relationship Between Acculturative Stress and Internalization Symptoms for Immigrant Origin Youth	IV	The results showed that first/second generation adolescents who experienced acculturative stress were more likely to internalize anxiety and depression symptoms. Furthermore, first generation adolescents are more likely to experience acculturative stress than second generation adolescents.

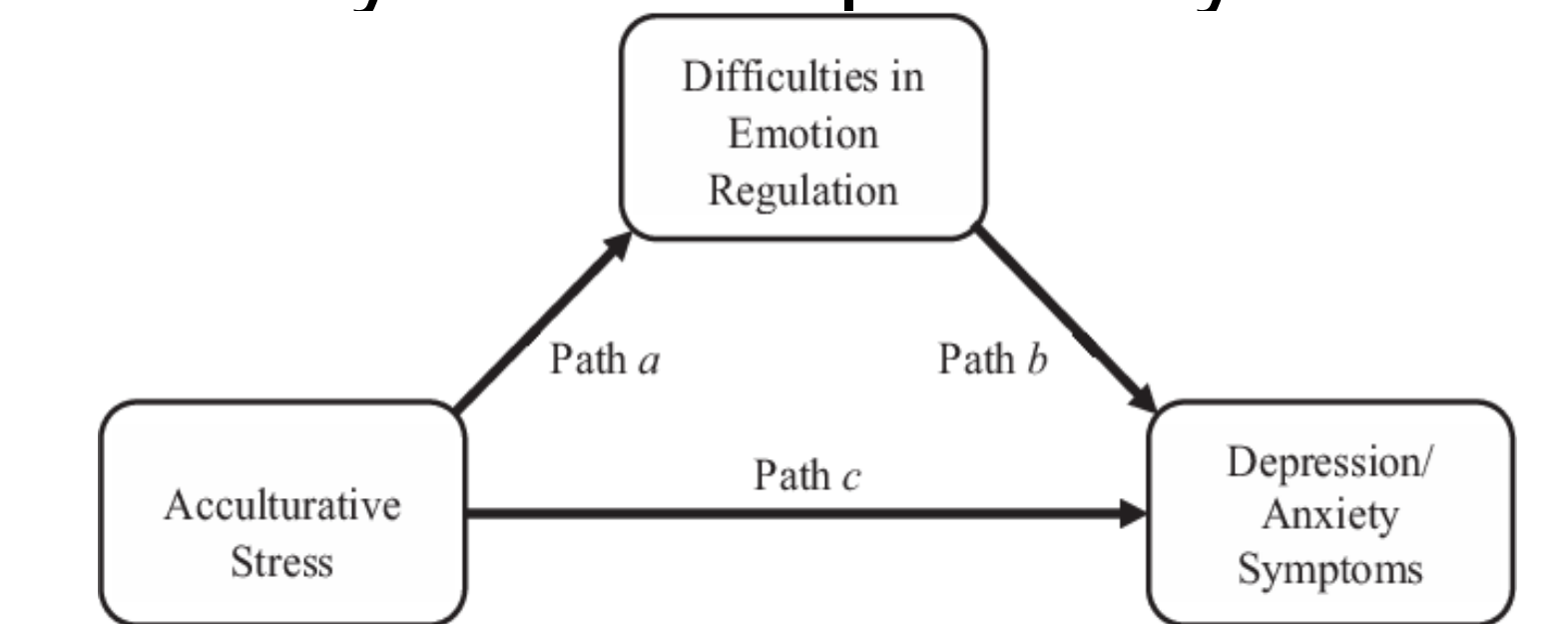
## Search Technique/Methods

**Search database:** ScienceDirect, PubMed/NCBI, PMC, Google Scholar

**Key words:** Acculturative stress, Anxiety disorder, Acculturative Stress and Anxiety disorders in Adolescents, Mental health disorders among first-generation adolescents.

## Summary

- Adolescents with high levels of acculturative stress are more likely to develop anxiety disorders



## Conclusions/Further Study

- Positive correlation between level of acculturative stress and presence of anxiety disorder
- Anxiety disorders are under-diagnosed, misdiagnosed, and inappropriately treated
- Further longitudinal studies of youth and adolescents can provide stronger evidence and more conclusive association

## References

Albeg, L. J., & Castro-Olivo, S. M. (2014). The Relationship between Mental Health, Acculturative Stress, and Academic Performance in a Latino Middle School Sample. *Contemp School Psychol* (2014) 18:178-186 DOI 10.1007/s40688-014-0010-1.

Da Silva, N., Dillon, F. R., Rose Verdejo, T., Sanchez, M., & De La Rosa, M. (2017). Acculturative Stress, Psychological Distress, and Religious Coping Among Latina Young Adult Immigrants. *The Counseling psychologist*, 45(2), 213-236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001100017692111>.

Ehlers, C. L., Gilder, D. A., Criado, J. R., & Caetano, R. (2009). Acculturation stress, anxiety disorders, and alcohol dependence in a select population of young adult Mexican Americans. *Journal of addiction medicine*, 3(4), 227-233. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ADM.0b013e3181ab6db7>.

Goforth, A. N., Pham, A. V., Chun, H., Castro-Olivo, S. M., & Yosai, E. R. (2016). Association of acculturative stress, Islamic practices, and internalizing symptoms among Arab American adolescents. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 31(2), 198-212. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq000135>.

Katsiaficas, D., Suarez-Orozco, C., Sirin, S. R., & Gupta, T. (2013). Mediators of the relationship between acculturative stress and internalization symptoms for immigrant origin youth. *Cultural diversity & ethnic minority psychology*, 19(1), 27-37. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031094>.

Leon, A. (2014). Immigration and Stress: The Relationship Between Parent's Acculturative Stress and Young Children's Anxiety Symptoms. *Inquiries*, 6(3). <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/861/5/immigration-and-stress-the-relationship-between-parents-acculturative-stress-and-young-childrens-anxiety-symptoms>.

Perreira, K. M., Marchante, A. N., Schwartz, S. J., Jassi, C. R., Carnethon, M. R., Corliss, H. L., Kaplan, R. C., Santisteban, D. A., Vidot, D. C., Van Horn, L., & Delamater, A. M. (2019). Stress and Resilience: Key Correlates of Mental Health and Substance Use in the Hispanic Community Health Study of Latino Youth. *Journal of immigrant and minority health*, 21(1), 4-13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-018-0724-7>.

Potoczniak, S. R., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). Depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youth: key correlates and implications for future research. *The Journal of nervous and mental disease*, 198(7), 470-477.

Sirin, S. R., Ryce, P., Gupta, T., & Rogers-Sirin, L. (2013). The role of acculturative stress on mental health symptoms for immigrant adolescents: A longitudinal investigation. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(4), 736-748. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028398>.

Smokowski, P. R., Bacallao, M., Lee Buchanan, R. (2009). Interpersonal Mediators Linking Acculturation Stressors to Subsequent Internalizing Symptoms and Self-esteem in Latino Adolescents. *Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 37, No. 8, 1024-1045. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/jcop.20346>.

Wang, C. D. C., Carbjajal, L., Barajas-Munoz, I. A., Julio, K., Gomez, A., Trummer, M., & Scalise, D. (2021). Adult attachment, acculturation, acculturative stress, and psychological distress of first-generation Latinx immigrants. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2021.1933910>.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2017). Depression and Other Common Mental Disorders. Retrieved August 21, 2021, from <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/254610/WHO-MSD-MER-2017.2-eng.pdf>.