A Randomized Clinical Trial of an HIV-Risk-Reduction Intervention Among Low-Income Latina Women

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Background: HIV infection has increased within the Latina community more than in any other ethnic or racial group within the United States. Latinas comprise only 13% of the U.S. population, yet they account for 20% of the cumulative reported cases of AIDS.

Objectives: The purpose of the study was to evaluate a randomized culturally tailored intervention to prevent high-HIV-risk sexual behaviors for Latina women residing in urban areas.

Methods: Mexican and Puerto Rican women (18–44 years of age; N = 657) who were sexually active during the previous 3 months were recruited and randomized into intervention and control groups. The intervention, facilitated by bilingual, bicultural, trained Latina women, consisted of culturally tailored sessions on understanding their bodies, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, condoms (myths and use), negotiating safer sex practices, violence prevention, and partner communication. Bivariate and multivariate analyses assessed changes from baseline.

Results: The intervention improved HIV knowledge, partner communication, risk-reduction behavioral intentions, and condom use, and decreased perceived barriers to condom use.

Discussion: The efficacy of a culturally-sensitive intervention to reduce HIV/AIDS-risk behaviors in Latina women was demonstrated in the current study.

Key Words: HIV, Latina, prevention