

Importance of Mixed Methodologies in the Study of Immigrant Mexican Youth

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Most studies seeking to understand the complexities of youth migration take a quantitative methodological approach, primarily focused on the cost of migration, from a male perspective. Little is known about female migration. This study sought to understand the unique migration experiences among 14-17 year old girls of Mexican-origin in the United States and in Mexico and its impact on their mental, reproductive health, and access to health care. Using a mixed methodological approach and a multistage migration framework the convenience sample represented both the sending and receiving countries. While quantitative instruments were used to measure mental health defined as depression, and pregnancy status, they were not able to fully capture the depression and pregnancy experience, or health care access. However, qualitative focus groups yielded a fuller understanding feeling depressed and the experience of the teens with pregnancy and their access to health care. Findings supported the need for mixed methodologies approaches to fully capture the experiences of migrating youth. Findings also identified gaps in traditional depression scales that do not account for migration and are not properly capturing the effect of culture on behaviors and beliefs of adolescent girls in the U.S. and Mexico.

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