

Mental Health Services Needed in Latino Youth

The National Institutes of Mental Health aims to reduce barriers to mental health care access for young Latinos.

August 11, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is seeking to address the growing [mental health](#) crisis among Latino youth, reports [Salud America!](#).

“When it comes to mental health research, Hispanic and Latino youth have been woefully understudied,” NIMH director Joshua Gordon, MD, PhD, wrote in a blog. “Evidence indicates that Hispanic and Latino youth have pressing mental health needs and are [not receiving adequate mental health care](#).”

[Studies have shown](#) that the COVID-19 pandemic widened existing disparities—such as poorer mental health and lower income—in minority communities, including Latinos.

Gordon cited stigma, racism, lack of cultural understanding and lack of insurance as some of the barriers that might prevent Latino youth from [accessing mental health care](#). Indeed, according to Salud America!, the Office of Minority Health found that Latinos have the highest uninsured rates of any racial or ethnic group in the United States.

A study published in the [Journal of Community Health](#) found that the suicide rate among Latinos in the United States has increased by 72% since 2010. That study’s authors emphasized the need to destigmatize mental illness and mental health care in Latino communities by having honest conversations about mental health and suicide.

For its part, NIMH intends to combat the mental health crisis among young Latinos by supporting community-based research to help Latino youth more readily access mental health services and researching interventions to help prevent or reduce symptoms of depression or anxiety, including a digital health tool.

“By supporting culturally responsive research that engages families and communities, we hope to push the field forward to address the pressing mental health needs of Hispanic and Latino youth,” Gordon wrote.

To read more, click [#Mental Health](#). There, you'll find headlines such as "[Latino Children Are More Depressed Than Their Peers](#)," "[Can Lack of Sleep Increase the Risk of Mental Health Problems in Kids?](#)" and "[Suicide Rates Spike Among Latinos](#)."

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