

# Attenuating the Link between Discrimination & Psychopathology among Latin American Gay Men

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- **Penn State Methodology Center**
- **Penn State Sexual & Gender Minority Health Special Interest Group**



**The Methodology Center**  
advancing methods, improving health

# Objectives

- 1. Investigate discrimination among Latin American gay men**
- 2. Demonstrate the link between discrimination frequency and psychopathology**
- 3. Illustrate the role of intrapersonal and social protective factors in the link between discrimination and psychopathology**

# Background: What We Know

**Mental Health:** sexual minorities exhibit higher rates of psychopathology

**Discrimination** → internalizing disorders and substance use *among American sexual minorities*

**Protective factors** → greater resilience and positive health outcome

# Background: What We Don't Know

**Latin American Gay men:** little research on discrimination and health

**Discrimination:** Culturally relevant forms of stigma and discrimination (e.g., masculine norms and machismo)

**Protective factors:** may not be the same as American gay men or heterosexual Latin Americans

# Hypotheses

**H1:** Discrimination is associated with psychopathologies (viz. alcohol dependence, past suicide thoughts and attempts, depressive symptoms).

**H2:** Protective factors (viz. self-esteem, social support, self-acceptance) moderate the association of discrimination with psychopathologies.

# Study Design

- Email recruitment of social/sexual networking site
- 22 Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries
- October & November 2012
- 643,000 users invited >36,063 completed survey

# Analysis Sample

$n=4,095$

- 16 Spanish/Portuguese speaking countries
- Identified as gay
- Cis-gender males
- Mean age: 21.78 (range: 18-24)
- Predominantly urban (96.51%)





# Discrimination

*As an adult, how often have you been made fun of or called names for being homosexual or effeminate?*

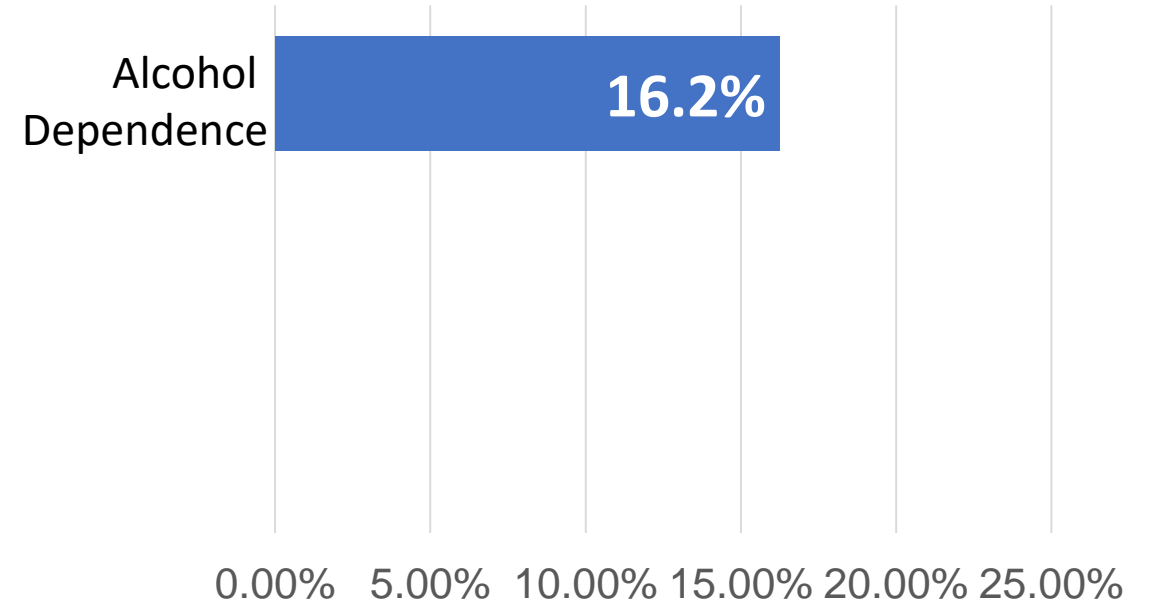
Responses collapsed to 3 levels:

Level	Response Options	Percent of Sample
No Discrimination	Never	34.36%
Some Discrimination	A few times; Once or Twice	60.37%
Frequent Discrimination	Many Times	5.27%

# Health Outcomes

## *Alcohol*

- CAGE Screener for alcohol dependence



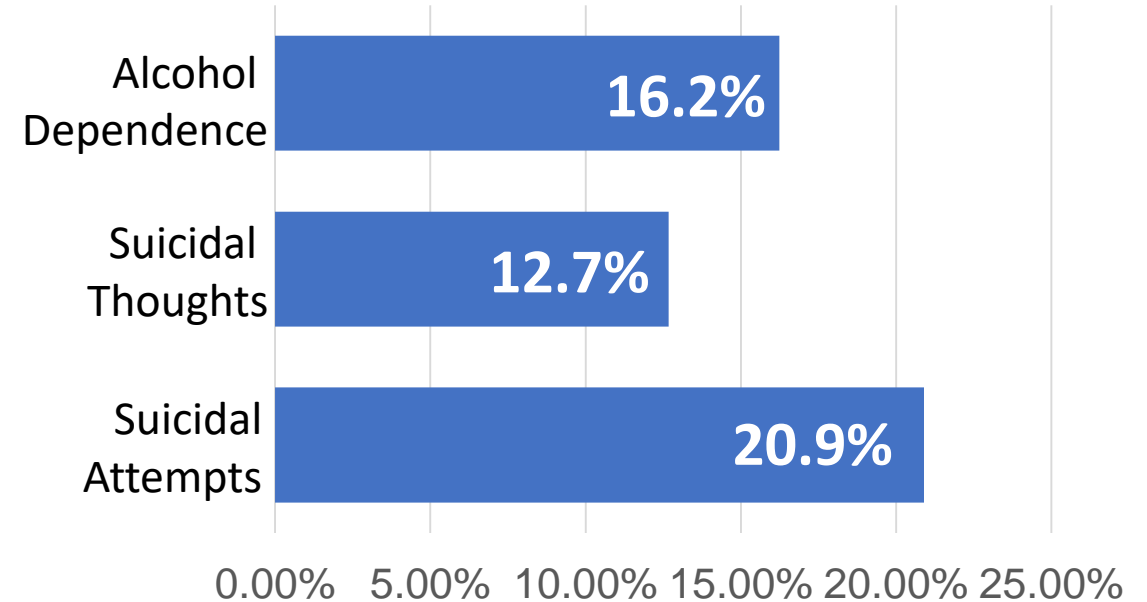
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## *Suicide*

- Thoughts in the month
- Attempts in lifetime



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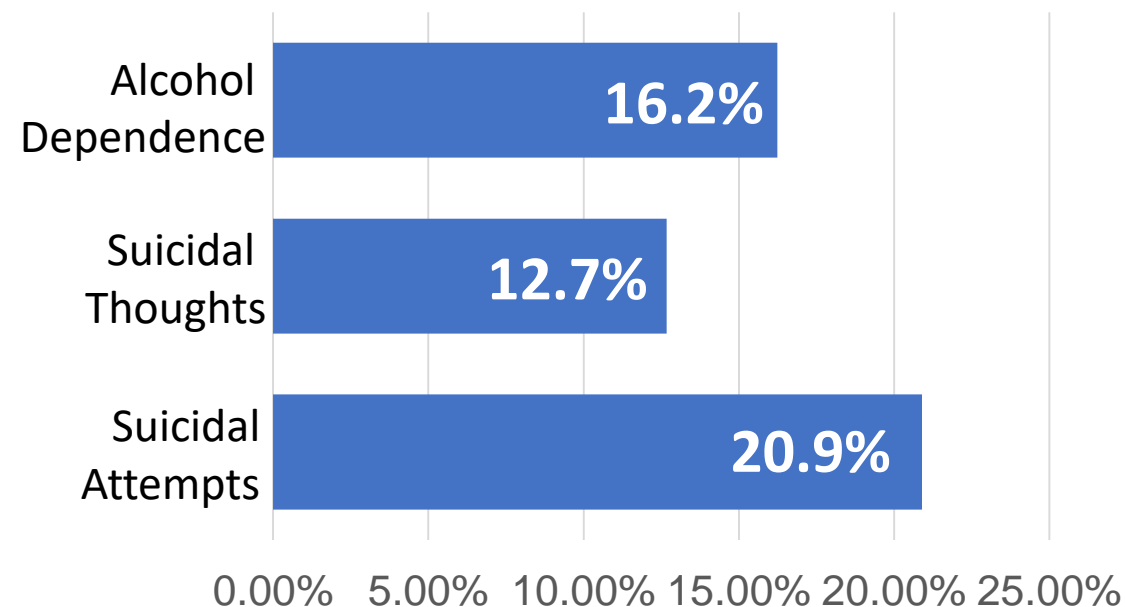
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## *Suicide*

- Thoughts in the month
- Attempts in lifetime

## *Depressive Symptoms*

- CESD-R-10
- Continuous sum of 10 items



Health Outcome	Mean (SD)
Depressive Symptoms	6.05 (5.02)



# Protective Factors

## *Self-esteem*

- 2 items (averaged score)
- 4 point Likert scale (1-4)

Protective Factor	Mean (SD)
Self-esteem	3.64 (0.54)

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## *Social Support*

- Satisfaction with social support
- 4 point Likert Scale (1-4)

Protective Factor	Mean (SD)
Self-esteem	3.64 (0.54)
Social Support	2.94 (1.05)

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## *Social Support*

- Satisfaction with social support
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## *Self-acceptance*

- Level of comfort being oneself
- 10 point scale (0-9)

Protective Factor	Mean (SD)
Self-esteem	3.64 (0.54)
Social Support	2.94 (1.05)
Self-acceptance	8.30 (1.69)

# Model Building Approach

Logistic and Generalized Linear Regression

## *Model Building Approach*

1. Main effects of discrimination
2. Add main effects of protective factors
3. Adjusted models by controlling for HIV status and rurality
4. Interaction between discrimination and protective factors



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Logistic and Generalized Linear Regression

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# Results: Alcohol dependence

	OR	95% CI		<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.20	0.18	0.23	<.01
Some discrimination	1.11	0.97	1.28	0.13
Frequent discrimination	<b>1.43</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-esteem	0.92	0.78	1.09	0.34
Social support	0.93	0.86	1.01	0.07
Self-acceptance	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>0.01</b>

After adding protective factors:

Some discrimination  $\Delta$ OR = .01

Frequent Discrimination  $\Delta$ OR = -.07

# Results: Suicidal Thoughts

	OR	95% CI		<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.13	0.11	0.15	<.01
Some discrimination	0.96	0.82	1.12	0.58
Frequent discrimination	<b>1.41</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-esteem	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Social support	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-acceptance	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>

After adding protective factors:

Some discrimination  $\Delta$ OR = .02

Frequent Discrimination  $\Delta$ OR = -.21

# Results: Suicide Attempt

	OR	95% CI		<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.30	0.26	0.33	<.01
Some discrimination	0.96	0.85	1.09	0.52
Frequent discrimination	<b>1.63</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-esteem	<b>0.65</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Social support	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-acceptance	1.00	0.95	1.05	0.96

After adding protective factors:

Some discrimination  $\Delta$ OR = .01

Frequent Discrimination  $\Delta$ OR = -.07

# Results: Depressive Symptoms

	$\beta^*$	$\beta$	95% CI		SE	$p$
Intercept		5.35	5.12	5.59	0.12	<.01
Some discrimination	<b>0.01</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Frequent discrimination	<b>0.08</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>2.48</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-esteem	<b>-0.27</b>	<b>-2.49</b>	<b>-2.78</b>	<b>-2.20</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Social support	<b>-0.08</b>	<b>-0.39</b>	<b>-0.52</b>	<b>-0.26</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
Self-acceptance	<b>-0.12</b>	<b>-0.59</b>	<b>-0.69</b>	<b>-0.50</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>

After adding protective factors:

Some discrimination  $\Delta\beta^* = -.04$  |  $\Delta\beta = -.34$

Frequent Discrimination  $\Delta\beta^* = -.03$  |  $\Delta\beta = -.78$

# Conclusions

1. Extends study of discrimination and health to Latin American gay men.
2. Supports link between discrimination and psychopathology
3. Illustrates attenuating role of protective factors
4. Impacting psychopathology among Latin American gay men should make efforts to decrease discrimination *and* increase protective factors

# Conclusions

Among Latin American gay men:

1. **Discrimination frequency is associated with increased odds of alcohol dependence, thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts, and number of depressive symptoms.**
2. **The effects of discrimination are lessened in the presence of protective factors.**

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**Thank you.**

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