



# Psychosocial Intervention

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## The likelihood of Latino women to seek help in response to interpersonal victimization: An examination of individual, interpersonal and sociocultural influences

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### ABSTRACT

Help-seeking is a process that is influenced by individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors. The current study examined these influences on the likelihood of seeking help (police, pressing charges, medical services, social services, and informal help) for interpersonal violence among a national sample of Latino women. Women living in high-density Latino neighborhoods in the USA were interviewed by phone in their preferred language. Women reporting being, on average, between “somewhat likely” and “very likely” to seek help should they experience interpersonal victimization. Sequential linear regression results indicated that individual (age, depression), interpersonal (having children, past victimization), and sociocultural factors (immigrant status, acculturation) were associated with the self-reported likelihood of seeking help for interpersonal violence. Having children was consistently related to a greater likelihood to seek all forms of help. Overall, women appear to respond to violence in ways that reflects their ecological context. Help-seeking is best understood within a multi-layered and dynamic context.

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## Probabilidad de que las mujeres latinas busquen ayuda cuando sufren victimización interpersonal: análisis de las influencias individuales, interpersonales y socioculturales

### RESUMEN

La búsqueda de ayuda es un proceso en el que influyen factores individuales, interpersonales y socioculturales. Este estudio analiza esta influencia en la probabilidad de buscar ayuda (policía, presentar cargos, servicios sanitarios o sociales y ayuda informal) en caso de violencia interpersonal en una muestra nacional de mujeres latinas. Se entrevistó telefónicamente en su idioma preferido a mujeres que viven en barrios latinos muy poblados de EE.UU. Sus respuestas fueron que la probabilidad media de pedir ayuda si experimentarían una victimización interpersonal estaría entre “algo” y “muy probable”. Los resultados de una regresión lineal secuencial indican que los factores individuales (edad, depresión), interpersonales (tener hijos, victimizaciones pasadas) y socioculturales (estatus de inmigrante, aculturación) se asociaban con la probabilidad manifestada por ellas de pedir ayuda en caso de violencia interpersonal. Tener hijos es la variable que guardaba una relación más estable con la probabilidad de pedir cualquier tipo de ayuda. En conjunto parece que las respuestas de las mujeres a la violencia reflejan su contexto ecológico. La búsqueda de ayuda se entiende mejor en un contexto dinámico de múltiples capas.

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#### Palabras clave

Búsqueda de ayuda  
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Mujeres latinas

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Interpersonal violence continues at substantial levels and affects women of all racial/ethnic groups (Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Women respond to victimization in myriad ways from defending themselves, avoiding the abuser, seeking social support and using formal resources such as mental health counseling, shelters, and the criminal justice system (Hamby, 2014). Help-seeking is a dynamic process including recognizing and defining the problem, deciding to seek help, and selecting support (Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra, & Weintraub, 2005). These processes are influenced by individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors according to an ecological-based theoretical model (Liang et al., 2005). While research has identified patterns of help-seeking as well as individual influences, a recent review found that social and cultural influences on help-seeking have been understudied (McCart, Smith, & Sawyer, 2010). Moreover, the review also called for a more comprehensive understanding of interpersonal violence – one that extends beyond intimate partner violence and sexual assault. Given the unique historical and cultural profiles of Latinos (Bean & Tienda, 1987), as well as limited available research on the group, it is important to focus research on this racial/ethnic group. Extant research shows that Latino women are generally more reluctant to seek formal help for their victimizations than White women and face a number of barriers (Rizo & Macy, 2011). The current study therefore examines individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors related to the likelihood of help-seeking in response to a range of interpersonal victimizations among a national sample of Latino women.

### Individual Influences on Help-Seeking

Individual factors tend to center on the cognitive processes, individual characteristics and resources, and coping styles associated with the help-seeking process (Liang et al., 2005). Variables such as self-worth, self-efficacy, self-consciousness, self-esteem, and locus of control have been examined in relationship to help-seeking (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Norris, Kaniasty, & Scheer, 1990; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Walsh, Blaustein, Knight, Spinazzola, & van der Kolk, 2007). An ecological model of responses to intimate partner violence includes emotional strengths and limitations at the individual level (Dutton, 1996). Clearly, violence erodes mental well-being and has been shown to increase depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anger, anxiety, and dissociation (Campbell, Sullivan, & Davidson, 1995; Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Cuevas, Sabina, & Picard, 2010; Golding, 1999; Kelly, 2010; Rodríguez et al., 2008). Emotional resources may be especially important for Latino women given that they experience more trauma-related symptoms related to domestic violence than non-Latino women (Edelson, Hokoda, & Ramos-Lira, 2007). Yet, other studies have found increased levels of service utilization when depression was present (Lipsky, Caetano, Field, & Bazargan, 2005; Norris et al., 1990; Nurius, Macy, Nwabuzor, & Holt, 2011). Assessing formal services may serve to increase mental health among Latino women (Cuevas, Bell, & Sabina, 2014), pointing to the interplay between these variables.

### Interpersonal Influences on Help-Seeking

Interpersonal influence on help-seeking include the relationships women have with others in their lives including the support they can expect from others and, conversely, the prior negative experiences they have had with others that shape their definition of the problem, decision to seek help, and choice of help source (Liang et al., 2005). For example, treatment by police, staff, and other professionals as well as reactions of informal confidants can hinder or facilitate help-seeking (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Behnke, Ames, & Hancock; Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Morrison, Luchok, Richter, & Parra-Medina, 2006; Reina, Lohman, & Maldonado, 2014). Another factor, which has been shown to influence help-seeking behaviors, is prior victimization (Sabina, Cuevas, &

Schally, 2012a). Those with prior victimization experiences are more likely to seek formal and informal help (Sabina et al., 2012a). This association falls in line with the survivor hypothesis – that women that experience elevated amounts of violence are more likely to enact various strategies to confront the violence (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988).

Furthermore, children's welfare exerts a powerful influence on the help-seeking decisions of women. A Latino woman in a qualitative study shared "I only thought about my children... One thinks about their children first and what one has to do" (Acevedo, 2000, p. 263), signaling the pull that children have in women's decisions (Kelly, 2009). In another study women shared that children's exposure to violence was the most painful part of violence and caused them deep anguish (Kyriakakis, Dawson, & Edmond, 2012). Children's exposure to violence could precipitate help-seeking as women seek to protect their children. Ammar and colleagues (Ammar, Orloff, Dutton, & Aguilar Hass, 2005) found that children's exposure to violence significantly predicted immigrant Latinas calling the police in response to battering, which was the only one of four significant factors related to increased levels of reporting.

### Sociocultural Influences on Help-Seeking

Most broadly, the social climate that allows or tolerates interpersonal violence complicates the help-seeking process (Barnett, 2000; Browning, 2002; Gracia & Tomas, 2014; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Specifically, sociocultural factors are concerned with the economic, political, and cultural context in which women experience victimization and undergoes the help-seeking process. These processes are shaped by gender, class, and culture (Liang et al., 2005). For example, economic resources such as income and employment may shape women's definitions of violence as well as available options. Economic resources may allow women to more easily classify behavior as unacceptable and give women more freedom to pursue options (Liang et al., 2005). Latino women in qualitative studies of help-seeking shared that financial considerations were part of their help-seeking decisions, especially when children were involved (Acevedo, 2000; Kelly, 2009). Over half of women in a sample of Latino women identified lack of money as an important barrier to obtaining services (Murdaugh, Hunt, Sowell, & Santana, 2004). Nonetheless, at least one study of Latino women found it was women with higher incomes who were more likely to stay in violent relationships, compared to women with lower incomes (Lacey, 2010).

Language barriers also influence the way women interact with the world around them. One of the most consistent barriers to help-seeking identified for Latino women is language (Rizo & Macy, 2011) as Spanish-speaking service providers are limited (Fitzgerald, 2003). In fact, it was the most commonly identified barrier to obtaining services for a sample of Latino women with 76% agreeing that not being able to speak English was an important reason for not getting help (Murdaugh et al., 2004). Latino women who spoke no English were significantly less likely to seek formal services than those who spoke some English or fluent English (Brabeck & Guzmán, 2009). However, data from a national sample of Latino women revealed that Latino women with Spanish language preference were equally likely to seek formal help for interpersonal victimization than those with English language preference. Nonetheless, Latino women with a Spanish language preference were less likely to seek informal help than Latino women with an English language preference (Sabina et al., 2012a).

Another aspect of sociocultural context that influences women's help-seeking decisions is immigrant status. Most studies found that immigrant status was associated with lower levels of formal help-seeking (Ingram, 2007; Rodriguez, Sheldon, Bauer, & Pérez-Stable, 2001; cf. Sabina et al., 2012a). Immigrant Latino women may have limited knowledge of formal service systems in the U.S., be unaware that services exist, have difficulty communicating in English, have small support networks, and/or prescribe to values which favor

preservation of marriage and family and sacrifice (Bauer, Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Flores-Ortiz, 2000; Dutton, Orloff, & Aguilar Hass, 2000; Lewis, West, Bautista, Greenberg, & Done-Perez, 2005; Moracco, Hilton, Hodges, & Frasier, 2005; Rizo & Macy, 2011). Undocumented women face additional barriers to help-seeking as they fear deportation and abusers may threaten to report them to the police (Dutton et al., 2000; Lewis et al., 2005). Quantitative research has shown that undocumented Latino women are 50% less likely to seek formal help than immigrant Latino women with permanent status (Zadnik, Sabina, & Cuevas, in press). Immigrants may also be less likely to be able to support themselves financially given language issues, further hindering help-seeking efforts (Rizo & Macy, 2011).

Relatedly, women's familiarity with the U.S. dominant culture and retention of their heritage culture can indeed influence the help-seeking process. Acculturation is a process that occurs when one comes in contact with a host culture and includes multiple dimensions such as practices, values, and identifications (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). First, women that espouse Latino cultural norms such as familism and strict gender roles may be hesitant to label behaviors as abusive and necessitating outside help. One woman shared "I don't know. In my country, there exists only sexual violence, but violence between a couple doesn't exist because we're taught that that's a cross we have to bear with our husband" (Bauer et al., 2000, p. 38). Even if one does label acts as abusive, the desire to preserve the family and protect the social position of the family can hinder disclosure (Ahrens, Rios-Mandel, Isas, & del Carmen Lopez, 2010). Latino women who are more Anglo acculturated potentially are more aware of how services work and may have less stigma attached to using services. Research has shown that low levels of acculturation are related to decreased levels of service utilization (Lipsky, Caetano, Field, & Larkin, 2006; Sabina et al., 2012a; West, Kaufman Kantor, & Jasinski, 1998). Perhaps, also, services are more geared and responsive to acculturated women. Indeed, bilingual and culturally responsive services are not commonplace (Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004). Unfortunately, women may face discrimination from service providers if they decide to seek help. For example, in a qualitative study of abused women, some of the Latina participants expressed the frustration they experience when doctors treat White clients more favorably than themselves (Bauer et al., 2000).

Given the previous research, which shows linkages between these three levels of influence (individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural) and the help-seeking process, the current study will empirically investigate how these levels of influence are related to help-seeking for Latino women. Data come from the Sexual Assault Among Latinas (SALAS) study that interviewed 2,000 adult Latino women in the U.S. (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010). This study overcomes prior limitations by including multiple variables that are related to help-seeking and including a geographically disperse sample. Further, the study asked all women, regardless of victimization history, how they would respond to interpersonal violence. The findings can offer practice and policy implications.

## Method

### Participants

The Sexual Assault Among Latinas (SALAS) Study, as described in previous publications (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010), examined interpersonal victimization, help-seeking, psychological functioning, and cultural factors among a national sample of Latino women. Bilingual phone interviews were conducted with 2,000 adult Latino women residing in high-density Latino areas (i.e., areas that were 80% Latino or higher). Data collection occurred from May through September 2008. The response rate was 30.7% and the cooperation rate was 53.7% as calculated in accordance with the American Association for Public Opinion Research (2009).

Demographic information on the sample is presented in Table 1. Over 70% were immigrants and the majority identified Spanish as

**Table 1**  
Sample descriptives (N = 2,000)

	Full Sample (N = 2,000)
	M (SD)
Age	47.76 (16.24)
SES	0.00 (1.00)
Anglo orientation	3.14 (1.02)
Latino orientation	4.23 (0.95)
Depression	49.18 (9.51)
Number of childhood victimizations	0.53 (1.01)
Number of adulthood victimizations	0.62 (1.14)
Importance of discrimination towards Latinos	3.74 (1.27)
Likelihood to report to police	4.68 (0.92)
Likelihood to press charges	4.54 (1.06)
Likelihood to get medical help	4.88 (0.55)
Likelihood to get help from social service agency	4.57 (0.99)
Likelihood to talk to friend/family/priest	4.68 (0.88)
Full Sample %	
Education level (%)	
Less than high school	38.3
High school grad/GED	24.9
Some college/trade school	14.0
Two year college graduate	6.9
Four year college graduate	10.3
Some graduate school	1.3
Graduate degree	4.2
Immigrant	71.5
Preferred language	
English	19.1
Spanish	76.4
Both Spanish and English	4.4
Other	0.2
Relationship status	
Single (never married)	13.2
Married	56.3
Cohabiting/committed relationship	7.6
Divorced	10.1
Widowed	10.1
Other	2.7
Has children	87.7
Employment status	
Employed full-time	27.7
Employed part-time	11.0
Unemployed	9.9
Retired	12.6
Homemaker	29.6
Other (students, public assistance, etc.)	9.1
Household income	
Under \$9,999	26.1
\$10,000 – \$19,999	26.0
\$20,000 – \$29,999	16.3
\$30,000 – \$39,999	9.4
\$40,000 – \$49,999	6.7
\$50,000 – \$59,999	4.0
\$60,000 – \$69,999	2.8
\$70,000 – \$79,999	2.1
\$80,000 or more	6.5

their preferred language (76.4%). Women were most commonly homemakers, reported household incomes of less than \$19,999 (52.1%), and had a high school education or less (63.2%), with almost 88% of the sample having children.

## Measures

**Demographic information.** Participant demographics collected in SALAS include age, country of origin, immigration status, preferred language, sexual orientation, educational level, employment status, household income in 2007, housing status, number of children, and relationship status. Participants were asked, "What country were you born in?" to assess immigrant status. Those not born in the U.S. were coded as immigrants. Those who indicated having one or more children were coded as having children. Those who indicated their preferred language was "English" or "Spanish and English" were coded as being English speaking. Those who reported they were "Employed full-time" or "Employed part-time" were coded as employed. SES was calculated by combining the z-scores of education and income and z-scoring the sum.

**Depression.** The depression scale of the Trauma Symptom Inventory (Briere, 1995) was used to assess depression. Participants indicated how often each symptom occurred in the last 6 months on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*often*). The TSI has been normed with men or women over the age of 18 and t-scores were used in analyses (Briere, 1995). Alpha for depression items was .86 for the SALAS sample and other studies have found adequate validity for the scale (Briere, 1995; Briere, Elliott, Harris, & Cotman, 1995; McDevitt-Murphy, Weathers, & Adkins, 2005).

**Victimization history.** Participants were asked if any of 12 screeners from the Lifetime Trauma and Victimization History (Widom, Dutton, Czaja, & DuMont, 2005) ever occurred in their lifetime. Screeners included stalking, physical assaults, weapon assaults, physical assaults in childhood, threats, threats with weapons, sexual assault, attempted sexual assault, sexual fondling, and witnessing murder, physical assaults, or sexual assaults. Follow-up questions included the age of occurrence, duration, frequency, perpetrator, injury, and posttraumatic reaction. Further, respondents were asked if anyone else ever did that to them, except for the witnessing questions. If so, respondents completed a second loop with regard to the incident type. The number of incidents that occurred during childhood (the victimization started and/or ended while the respondent was 17 or younger) and the number of incidents that occurred in adulthood (the victimization started and/or ended while the respondent was 18 or older) were tallied.

**Discrimination.** Respondents were asked their opinions on societal problems facing America in general and in the Latino community specifically. Participants were asked to rate six social problems on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very big*). One of the items asked how much of a problem discrimination towards Latinos is in American society.

**Acculturation.** The Brief Acculturation Rating Scale of Mexican-Americans-II (ARSMA-II) was used to assess both minority and majority cultural identity (Bauman, 2005). The two subscales of the measure, totaling 12 items, are Anglo orientation and Mexican orientation, which is referred to here as Latino orientation given the diversity of the sample and the fact that none of the scale items are Mexican-specific. The scale has been previously used with Mexican-Americans and other Latino-Americans (Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; Ojeda, Patterson, & Strathdee, 2008). Participants indicate the degree to which each statement accurately describes them on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*). For our sample, we found acceptable internal consistency (alpha) for both the Anglo orientation scale (.78) and Mexican orientation scale (.86).

**Likelihood of help-seeking.** All participants, regardless of victimization history were asked to indicate how likely they would

be to seek help for interpersonal victimization. The following was read, "If any of the negative events we asked you about in this survey ever happened in the future, how likely would you do the following, would you say very likely, somewhat likely, neither likely or unlikely, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely that you would..." Prompts were: report the incident to the police; press charges/take them to court; get medical help if you were seriously injured; get help from a social service agency counselor, or crisis center; talk to a friend, family member or priest. Response choices were 1 (*very likely*) to 5 (*very unlikely*). Responses were reverse coded such that high scores indicated greater likelihood of engaging in help-seeking.

## Procedure

The procedure of SALAS is described at length in the technical report (Cuevas & Sabina, 2010). To summarize, women were selected via random-digit dialing applied in high-density Latino neighborhoods (generally 80% Latino or higher) across the U.S. based on 2000 Census figures. Upon reaching a household, the interviewer inquired about the total number of age-eligible Latino females in the household. If one eligible person was in the household they were asked to participate. If more than one person was eligible, the person with the most recent or next closest birthday was asked to participate (Salmon & Nichols, 1983). Once a respondent was selected, they were read the informed consent and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. Women were interviewed in either English or Spanish. Participants were told it was best to answer the questions while they were alone and comfortable and were given a code phrase should they need to end of the call suddenly. Participants were then asked the various study instruments in the following order: questions about state of social issues, demographic information, acculturation, lifetime victimization, help-seeking behaviors for the event that took place in the United States that was most upsetting, likelihood of help-seeking, religiosity, gender role ideology, psychological symptoms, and posttraumatic symptoms. Interviews were conducted using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) system. The average time to complete the survey for all participants was 28 minutes. Upon completing the survey, participants were asked if they felt distressed and were offered a support hotline or callback to follow up with them (about 1% of the sample asked for a callback). Participants were paid \$10 for their participation. An Institutional Review Board approved all procedures.

## Analyses

First, correlations were run to ascertain the bivariate relationships between study variables. Then a series of sequential linear regressions were used to determine how various ecological factors influence the likelihood of help-seeking. Data were entered in 3 stages. First, individual factors were entered (age, depression), then interpersonal factors (respondent has children, count of childhood victimizations, count of adulthood victimizations), and lastly socio-cultural factors (socioeconomic status, employment, immigrant status, English language preference, acculturation including Anglo and Latino orientations, and rated importance of discrimination as a social problem).

## Results

### Correlations

Correlation coefficients are shown in Table 2. With regard to individual variables, age was generally not significantly associated with the likelihood of help-seeking, except for obtaining medical help. Those who reported higher likelihood of getting medical help were younger ( $r = -.05$ ). Depression was significantly negatively associated with the likelihood of all forms of help-seeking ( $r$ 's

ranging from -.05 to -.09), except social services. With regard to the interpersonal variables, having children was positively associated with the likelihood of all forms of help-seeking (*r*'s ranging from .05 to .11). The number of childhood victimizations was negatively associated with the likelihood of reporting to police (*r* = -.10), the likelihood of seeking social services (*r* = -.09), and the likelihood of informal help-seeking (*r* = -.04). Adulthood victimizations were only significantly associated with decreased likelihood of seeking social services (*r* = -.09). Turning to sociocultural variables, socioeconomic status was only significantly associated with decreased likelihood of seeking social services (*r* = -.06). Employment was associated with a greater likelihood of pressing charges (*r* = .05) and getting medical help (*r* = .05). Being an

immigrant was associated with greater likelihoods of reporting to the police (*r* = .09), pressing charges (*r* = .05), and seeking social services (*r* = .10). English language preference was associated with decreased likelihoods of reporting to the police (*r* = -.06) and seeking social services (*r* = -.12). An Anglo orientation was associated with a decreased likelihood of seeking social services (*r* = -.07). Latino orientation was associated with an increased likelihood of reporting to the police (*r* = .10), pressing charges (*r* = .05), seeking social services (*r* = .13), and informal help-seeking (*r* = .06). The importance of discrimination as a social problem was not associated with the likelihood of any of the forms of help-seeking. Forms of help-seeking were positively associated amongst themselves (*r*'s ranging from .32 to .62).

**Table 2**  
Correlations matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Age	--																
2. Depression	.09	--															
3. Has children	.21	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	--														
4. Childhood vic	-.23	.16	-.11	--													
5. Adulthood vic	-.08	.16	.01	.37	--												
6. SES	-.11	-.11	-.14	.15	.16	--											
7. Employment	-.20	.03 <sup>ns</sup>	-.09	.10	.11	.30	--										
8. Immigrant	.10	.03 <sup>ns</sup>	.16	-.22	-.16	-.28	-.11	--									
9. English	-.11	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.16	.28	.25	.42	.22	-.60	--								
10. Anglo orientation	-.11	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.21	.23	.19	.46	.21	-.51	.62	--							
11. Latino orientation	.05	.00 <sup>ns</sup>	.10	-.23	-.21	-.37	-.16	.46	-.59	-.41	--						
12. Discrimination	-.05	.10	.02 <sup>ns</sup>	.07	.08	-.11	-.04 <sup>ns</sup>	.08	-.08	-.06	.12	--					
13. Report to police	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.09	.08	-.10	-.04 <sup>ns</sup>	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.02 <sup>ns</sup>	.09	-.06	-.00 <sup>ns</sup>	.10	-.00 <sup>ns</sup>	--				
14. Press charges	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.05	.05	-.03 <sup>ns</sup>	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.03 <sup>ns</sup>	.05	.05	-.04 <sup>ns</sup>	.03 <sup>ns</sup>	.05	-.02 <sup>ns</sup>	.62	--			
15. Medical help	-.05	-.06	.11	.00 <sup>ns</sup>	.04 <sup>ns</sup>	.02 <sup>ns</sup>	.05	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.00 <sup>ns</sup>	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.00 <sup>ns</sup>	.38	.34	--		
16. Social service	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	-.03 <sup>ns</sup>	.11	-.09	-.09	-.06	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.10	-.12	-.07	.13	.02 <sup>ns</sup>	.35	.37	.39	--	
17. Informal help	-.02 <sup>ns</sup>	-.05	.05	-.04	-.04 <sup>ns</sup>	.02 <sup>ns</sup>	.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.04 <sup>ns</sup>	-.02 <sup>ns</sup>	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.06	-.01 <sup>ns</sup>	.32	.33	.37	.42	--

Note. SES = socioeconomic status.  
All correlations significant at the *p* < .05 level, except those noted non-significant (*ns*).

**Sequential Regressions**

Each step significantly improved the overall fit of the model for reporting to the police (see Table 3). In the final model the individual variable of depression was related to a decreased likelihood of reporting to the police ( $\beta = -.08, p = .001$ ); the interpersonal variables of having children was related to an increased likelihood of reporting to the police ( $\beta = .07, p = .002$ ) while the number of childhood victimizations was related to a decreased likelihood of reporting to the police ( $\beta = -.07, p = .006$ ); and the sociocultural variables of being an immigrant, Anglo orientation, and Latino orientation were associated with an increased likelihood of reporting to the police ( $\beta$ 's = .08, .08, and .09, respectively, *p*'s < .02).

Only the final model significantly improved the fit of the model for pressing charges (see Table 4). In the final model the interpersonal variable of having children was related to an increased likelihood of pressing charges ( $\beta = .06, p = .02$ ) and sociocultural variables of being an immigrant and Anglo orientation were associated with an increased likelihood of pressing charges ( $\beta$ 's = .06, and .09, respectively, *p*'s < .04).

Individual and interpersonal variables added significantly to the overall fit of the model for getting medical help, but the sociocultural

variables did not (see Table 5). The second model showed that the individual variables of age and depression were associated with a decreased likelihood of getting medical help ( $\beta$ 's = -.07 and -.06, respectively, *p*'s < .01) and the interpersonal variable of having children was associated with an increased likelihood of getting medical help ( $\beta = .12, p < .001$ ).

Interpersonal and sociocultural variables added significantly to the overall fit of the model for using social services, but the individual variables did not (see Table 6). The final model showed that the interpersonal variable of having children was associated with an increased likelihood of using social services ( $\beta = .11, p < .001$ ) while the number of adulthood victimizations was associated with a diminished likelihood of using social services ( $\beta = -.06, p = .02$ ). Additionally, the sociocultural variable of Latino orientation was associated with an increased likelihood of using social services ( $\beta = .08, p = .01$ ).

Only interpersonal variables added significantly to the overall fit of the model for informal help-seeking (see Table 7). The second model showed that the interpersonal variable of having children was associated with an increased likelihood of informal help-seeking ( $\beta = .06, p = .01$ ).

**Table 3**  
Summary of sequential regression analysis for variables modeling likelihood of reporting to police ( $N = 1858$ )

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Age	.00	.00	.02	-.00	.00	-.02	-.00	.00	-.01
Depression	-.01	.00	-.10***	-.01	.00	-.08**	-.01	.00	-.08**
Has child				.21	.07	.07**	.21	.07	.08**
Childhood victimization				-.08	.02	-.09**	-.07	.02	-.07**
Adulthood victimization				.01	.02	.01	.01	.02	.01
SES							.03	.03	.03
Employment							.05	.05	.03
Immigrant							.17	.06	.08**
English							-.00	.08	-.00
Anglo orientation							.07	.03	.08*
Latino orientation							.09	.03	.09*
Discrimination							-.01	.02	-.01
$R^2$	.01***			.02***			.03*		
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$	8.48***			7.84***			4.32*		

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 4**  
Summary of sequential regression analysis for variables modeling likelihood of pressing charges

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Age	.00	.00	.00	-.00	.00	-.02	-.00	.00	-.01
Depression	-.01	.00	-.05*	-.01	.00	-.04	-.01	.00	-.04
Has child				.17	.08	.05*	.19	.08	.06*
Childhood victimization				-.03	.03	-.03	-.02	.03	-.02
Adulthood victimization				.01	.02	.01	.01	.02	.01
SES							.03	.03	.03
Employment							.09	.05	.04
Immigrant							.15	.07	.06*
English							-.11	.09	-.04
Anglo orientation							.10	.03	.09**
Latino orientation							.05	.03	.05
Discrimination							-.02	.02	-.02
$R^2$	.00			.00			.01**		
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$	2.27			2.24			3.37**		

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

**Table 5**  
Summary of sequential regression analysis for variables modeling likelihood of getting medical help

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Age	-.00	.00	-.04	-.00	.00	-.07**	-.00	.00	-.06*
Depression	-.00	.00	-.06**	-.00	.00	-.06**	-.00	.00	-.06*
Has child				.21	.04	.12***	.21	.04	.12***
Childhood victimization				-.00	.01	-.00	-.00	.01	-.00
Adulthood victimization				.02	.01	.05	.02	.01	.04
SES							.01	.02	.01
Employment							.06	.03	.05*
Immigrant							.01	.04	.00
English							-.02	.05	-.02
Anglo orientation							.01	.02	.01
Latino orientation							.01	.02	.01
Discrimination							-.00	.01	-.00
$R^2$	.01**			.02***			.03		
<i>F</i> for change in $R^2$	5.47**			10.39***			.80		

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 6**

Summary of sequential regression analysis for variables modeling likelihood of using social service agency

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Age	.00	.00	.01	-.00	.00	-.04	-.00	.00	-.03
Depression	-.00	.00	-.03	.00	.00	-.00	-.00	.00	-.01
Has child				.36	.07	.12***	.33	.07	.11***
Childhood victimization				-.06	.03	-.06*	-.04	.03	-.04
Adulthood victimization				-.07	.02	-.08*	-.05	.02	-.06*
SES							-.01	.03	-.01
Employment							.09	.05	.05
Immigrant							.04	.07	.02
English							-.13	.08	-.06
Anglo orientation							.04	.03	.04
Latino orientation							.08	.03	.08*
Discrimination							.00	.02	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.00			.03***			.04**		
<i>F</i> for change in <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.76			15.51***			3.46**		

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001**Table 7**

Summary of sequential regression analysis for variables modeling likelihood of informal help-seeking

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Age	.00	.00	-.01	-.00	.00	-.03	-.00	.00	-.03
Depression	-.01	.00	-.05	-.00	.00	-.04	-.00	.00	-.03
Has Child				.16	.06	.06*	.17	.07	.06*
Childhood victimization				-.03	.02	-.03	-.03	.02	-.03
Adulthood victimization				-.02	.02	-.03	-.02	.02	-.03
SES							.03	.02	.04
Employment							.02	.05	.01
Immigrant							.06	.06	.03
English							.06	.07	.03
Anglo orientation							.02	.03	.02
Latino orientation							.06	.03	.07*
Discrimination							-.00	.02	-.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.00			.01*			.01		
<i>F</i> for change in <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	2.50			3.66*			1.18		

\**p* < .05

## Discussion

This study examined individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that influence likelihood of help-seeking for interpersonal violence among Latino women. The findings as a whole underscore that each factor plays a role in help-seeking decisions of Latino women. Overall, Latino women indicated that they would be between somewhat likely and very likely to seek help for interpersonal violence. Individual level variables included age and depression. Depression was associated with a decreased likelihood of help-seeking (police and medical), while age was associated with a decreased likelihood of seeking medical attention. Interpersonal variables included having children, childhood victimizations, and adulthood victimizations. Having children was significantly associated with increased likelihoods of each form of help-seeking and thus was the most consistent predictor of help-seeking in this study. Past victimization was associated with decreased likelihood of reporting to the police and seeking social services. Lastly, of all the sociocultural variables examined (socioeconomic status,

employment, immigrant status, English language preference, Anglo orientation, Latino orientation, and discrimination), only immigrant status, Anglo orientation, and Latino orientation were associated with an increased likelihood of help-seeking.

The individual factor of depression may inhibit certain forms of help-seeking such as contacting the police and receiving medical attention according to the results of this study. This relationship may be due to depression being related to past victimizations and a low level of other resources (Liang et al., 2005). For example, Carlson, McNutt, Choi, and Rose (2002) found that depression was related to lower levels of social support, self-esteem, and health. Latino women who experienced abuse and had depressive symptoms shared that their childhood victimization continues to impact their functioning (Nicolaidis et al., 2011). They also felt that keeping things inside caused their depression. While they valued talking about their experiences, they also acknowledged that at times there is an inability to talk about their pain (Nicolaidis et al., 2011). These strains on coping with violence that are associated with depression – specifically, depression being rooted in past victimization experiences, low levels of social

support, and difficulty in sharing these experiences – may account for some of the findings here. It is important to note, however, that studies commonly find that among victims, depression can work to facilitate help-seeking (Lipsky et al., 2005; Norris et al., 1990; Nurius et al., 2011). Victims who experience depression potentially seek help to cope with the needs related to victimization. This likely highlights the difference between hypothetical versus actual help-seeking in response to violence. In this study, women who were depressed at the time of the interview likely had feelings of hopelessness and pessimism that colored their perceptions of seeking help.

The interpersonal factor of having children was consistently associated with the likelihood of seeking help. This finding reflects prior research that shows that the well-being of children is often the primary concern for women as they deal with violence in their lives (Acevedo, 2000; Kelly, 2009; Kyriakakis et al., 2012). Women with children are likely motivated to use available resources to thwart future violence towards themselves and their children. The concern and protection women display for their children may be of heightened importance among Latino women, whose culture stresses the motherhood and women's relationship to the family (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987).

Another interpersonal influence on the likelihood of seeking help found in the current study was past victimization. Childhood victimization was associated with a diminished likelihood of seeking help from police while adulthood victimization was associated with a diminished likelihood of utilizing social services. In both of these cases, those with past victimizations may have difficulty trusting others, disclosing victimization, and/or may have had previous negative experiences with seeking help. The ramifications of violence, including the associated mental and physical strains (Campbell et al., 1995; Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Cuevas et al., 2010; Golding, 1999; Kelly, 2010; Rodríguez et al., 2008), may hinder women from seeking help for other interpersonal victimizations, should they occur. However, as mentioned, prior victimization experiences are generally associated with an increased likelihood of actual help-seeking (Sabina et al., 2012a).

Lastly, the sociocultural variables of immigrant status, Anglo orientation, and Latino orientation were also related to the likelihood of seeking help. Anglo orientation has been found to be related to increased help-seeking in studies of actual help-seeking for violence (Lipsky et al., 2006; Sabina et al., 2012a; West et al., 1998) and the trend is echoed here as it pertains to hypothetical help-seeking. However, immigrant status and Latino orientation are generally found to decrease actual help-seeking, especially with regard to the police and pressing charges (Ammar et al., 2005; Ingram, 2007; Rodríguez et al., 2001), but here they were related to an increased likelihood of seeking help. Perhaps these respondents who are more oriented to Latino culture, with its emphasis on *simpatía* (Triandis, Marín, Lisansky, & Betancourt, 1984), may have responded in socially desirable ways. That is, they may have indicated they would seek help if they believed that doing so was the "correct" response. An alternative interpretation would be that immigrant women may be eager to use the criminal justice system in the U.S. as some report that their home countries did not include well-developed infrastructures to protect women against violence (Ahrens et al., 2010).

It is also interesting that factors such as socioeconomic status and language preference did not surface as significant influences on the likelihood of seeking help. The sample largely preferred Spanish (about 75%) and most had household incomes below \$40,000. Perhaps more variation in the sample would have allowed an association to surface. It should also be noted that these variables were associated with the Anglo and Latino orientation subscales that were significant in some models. Future research is needed to examine how all of the variables included here influence help-seeking among women of various ethnic/racial groups.

While this study offers insights into the likelihood of help-seeking among Latino women, there are several limitations to note. First, the questions used to probe for potential help-seeking lumped all forms of interpersonal victimization together. Research shows that help-seeking responses differ according to the type of violence, victim-perpetrator relationship, and the severity of violence (McCart et al., 2010; Sabina, Cuevas, & Schally, 2012b), none of which were included here. Social support is an important construct that has several links with help-seeking (Liang et al., 2005), but was not examined here. Thus, the results allow a preliminary look into the likelihood of help-seeking. SALAS sampled from high-density Latino areas and therefore does not represent Latino women living in low-density Latino areas. Neighborhood level variables may influence the associations found here, but the study does not allow for examination of these differences.

The main implication of the current study is that help-seeking decisions are embedded in ecological contexts. Each level of influence from the individual, to interpersonal, to sociocultural shapes help-seeking decisions, that is, the context of help-seeking decisions is a vital area for exploration both in research and in practice. Research implications of the current study includes the need to build on previous work to flesh out the various variables that influence help-seeking and to understand the interaction of levels of influence. Practice implications include the need for service providers to take into account the interpersonal and sociocultural context of women as they seek to understand past behavior and aid women in making future help-seeking decisions. The complexity of help-seeking decisions needs to be understood in order for interventions to be pertinent and beneficial.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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