

Detained Latino youth: A need for connection to community resources

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Background

Detained youth have poorer health outcomes than their peers who are not involved with the juvenile justice system. Most studies on detained youth have looked at outcomes by race but not ethnicity.

Purpose

This study compared detention history and health outcomes of detained youth by race and ethnicity.

Methods

We surveyed youth detained at a juvenile detention facility. Data were collected using surveys and abstraction from medical records. Logistic regression models determined the association between race/ethnicity, detention history, and health outcomes.

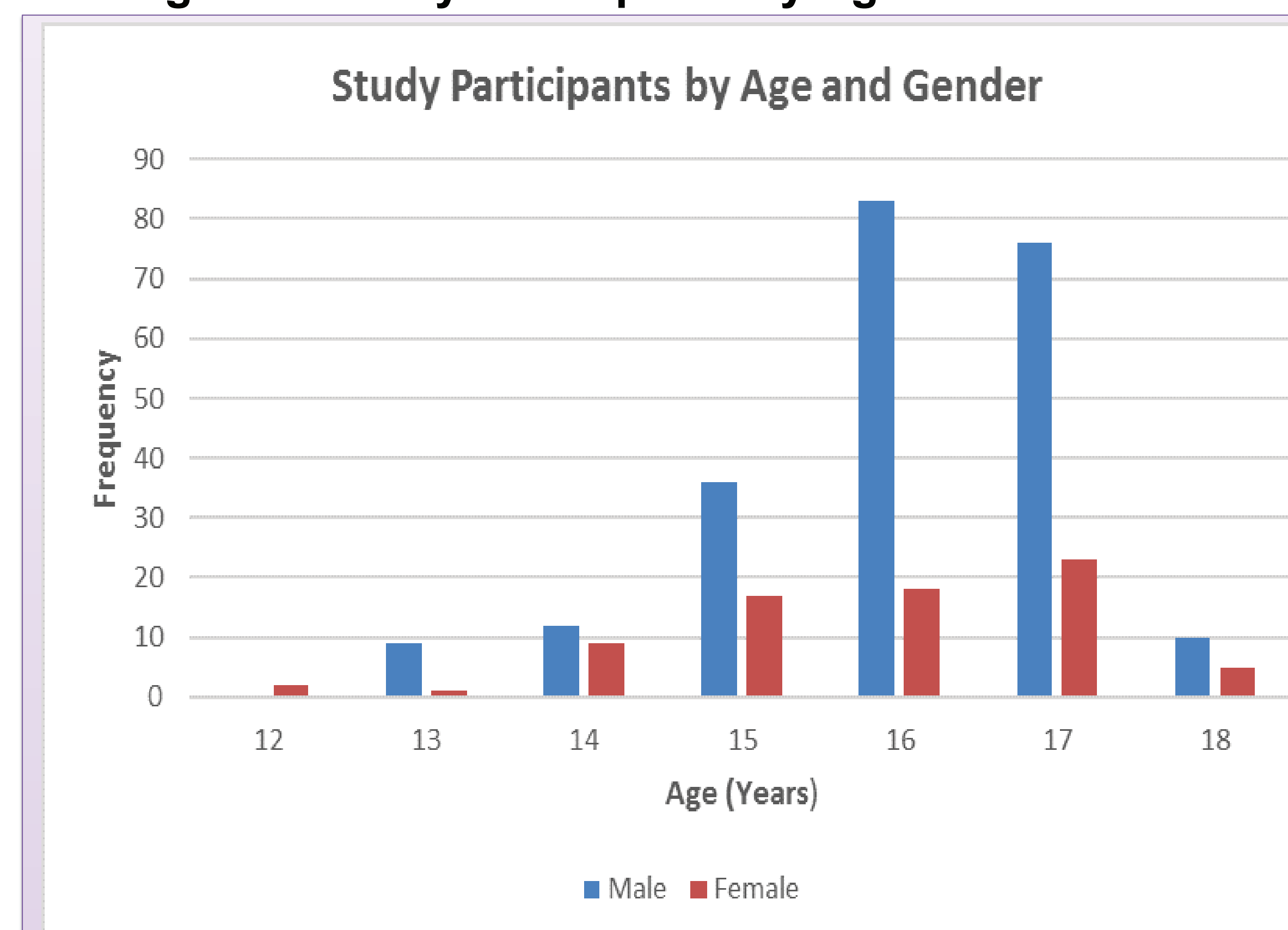
Results

Latino youth were more likely to have a prior history of detention, and to report a history of substance use. Latino males were more likely than non-Latino males to have been detained before (OR – 2.4; p=0.03).

Results

A greater proportion of Latino youth reported that they were depressed at the time that they were admitted to the detention center compared to non-Latino youth. The numbers were 27%, 20%, 19% for Latino, African American and Caucasian youth respectively.

Figure 1: Study Participants by Age and Gender



If you needed to talk to someone about substance use, or mental health issues where would you go to get help?

"A doctor? A Hospital? I don't know."

"I don't have anyone to talk to about that."

"I'd go to a homie - a friend, a girl."

"A counselor but I don't know how to find one."

"I don't know, I have never thought about it. I only use marijuana not drugs."

Figure 2: Resources for Help with Drug and Alcohol Use by Race/Ethnicity

	Latino		Black		White	
	Crude OR (p-value)	Age Adjusted OR (p-value)	Crude OR (p-value)	Age adjusted OR (p-value)	Crude OR (p-value)	Age adjusted OR (p-value)
Prior history of detention	1.8 (0.04)	1.8 (0.06)	1.0 (0.9)	1.0 (0.8)	0.5 (0.02)	0.5 (0.03)
Marijuana use	2.5 (0.004)	2.6 (<0.001)	0.4 (0.002)	0.4 (<0.001)	1.3 (0.5)	1.3 (0.002)
Cocaine use	3.0 (0.02)	3.0 (0.12)	0.1 (<0.001)	0.1 (<0.001)	2.9 (0.03)	3.1 (0.13)
Suicidal at the time of admission to detention center	1.7 (0.4)	1.8 (0.07)	0.9 (0.9)	0.9 (0.1)	0.4 (0.4)	0.4 (0.07)
Benzodiazepine use	4.1 (<0.001)	3.9 (0.004)	0.2 (<0.001)	0.2 (0.001)	1.3 (0.5)	1.3 (0.8)
Alcohol use	3.2 (<0.001)	3.1 (<0.001)	0.2 (<0.001)	0.2 (<0.001)	1.8 (0.06)	1.8 (0.1)
Synthetic marijuana	1.3 (0.5)	1.3 (0.7)	0.5 (0.04)	0.5 (0.13)	2.0 (0.1)	2.0 (0.2)
Cigarettes/tobacco use	2.0 (0.1)	2.0 (0.2)	0.7 (0.3)	0.6 (0.4)	0.7 (0.6)	0.7 (0.5)
Any substance use	2.3 (0.02)	2.3 (0.001)	0.4 (0.001)	0.4 (<0.001)	1.5 (0.2)	1.5 (0.002)

Results

Despite being more likely to report substance use and symptoms of depression at the time of admission to the detention center, over one third of Latino youth were unable to identify resources in their communities where they could go for help with mental health or substance use issues.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that Latino youth have worse outcomes compared to other detained youth. Cultural differences should be considered when designing interventions for detained youth. Community asset mapping specific to mental illness and substance use prevention should be conducted in neighborhoods where Latino youth live.

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