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Individual Abstract Number: 1504**Latina Acculturation and Pregnancy from a Biopsychosocial Perspective: Anxiety, Social Support, and Blood Pressure**

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Research suggests acculturation or assimilation to U.S. culture is bad for immigrants' health. Accordingly, greater Latina-American acculturation has been associated with giving birth to lower birth weight babies (Campos et al., 2007). Lower birth weight increases the risk of infant mortality and morbidity (Thompson et al., 1997). Therefore, it is important to identify the pathways linking Latina acculturation to pregnancy outcomes. Here we consider how stress, anxiety, social support, and blood pressure (BP) during pregnancy can help us understand the association between Latina-American acculturation and birth weight.

In two studies, involving 1,120 Latina-American women (Study 1 $N=108$; Study 2 $N=1,011$), multiple stress and BP measures were collected over the course of pregnancy. Using multilevel Bayesian structural equation models, we were able to examine average BP and stress, and the slopes of changes in these variables over the course of pregnancy. Foreign born (less acculturated) women without social support reported high pregnancy anxiety, which decreased over the course of pregnancy. When social support was high, foreign-born women had lower pregnancy anxiety throughout pregnancy. In US-born (more acculturated) women social support had no effect on pregnancy anxiety. Furthermore, in US-born women and those reporting greater acculturation on the *ARSMIA-II* measure, pregnancy anxiety was associated with higher average diastolic BP (DBP) and a steeper increase in DBP, which in turn were associated with lower adjusted birth weight. Thus, social support appeared to buffer pregnancy anxiety in foreign-born Latina women only. Also, these less acculturated women did not show the associations among pregnancy anxiety, DBP, and birth weight found in more acculturated Latina women.

The effect of social support depended on Latina-American acculturation and was consistent with current theories regarding the benefits of Latino cultural values (Sabogal et al., 1987). Our findings suggest that for more acculturated Latinas the lack of this social support benefit is associated with higher DBP during pregnancy, which increases the risk of low birth weight (Hilmert et al., 2014). Research should continue to explore the biopsychosocial nature of cultural advantages and how acculturation puts Latina pregnancies at risk.