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Internalized HIV Stigma, Internalized Homophobia, and Depression among Latino MSM Living with HIV

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Both internalized HIV-related stigma and internalized homophobia have been shown to contribute to mental health problems, including depression. We examined the effect of both stigmas on self-reported depressive symptoms in a sample of HIV+ Latino men who have sex with men (MSM). We administered the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-1A), the Multidimensional Measure of Internalized HIV Stigma Scale (MMIHS), and the Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHP) to 123 HIV+ Latino MSM at an HIV clinic in El Paso, TX. Depressive symptoms were correlated (r=.51, p<.05) with scores on the MMIHS and with scores on the IHP (r=.25, p<.05). The combined effects of HIV-related stigma and internalized homophobia significantly predicted depressive symptoms in a multiple regression analysis (R=.54, F=24.33, p<.05). We computed a hierarchical regression analysis between scores on the MMIHS and IHP, and self-reported depressive symptoms, which demonstrated that internalized HIV stigma contributes unique variance to the prediction of depressive symptoms among HIV-positive Latino MSM, above and beyond that accounted for by internalized homophobia. Implications of this study are that future interventions for people living with HIV/AIDS may focus more on the effects of internalized HIV-related stigma, especially on mental health outcomes.