The Sensitivity of Two Common Depression Measures in a Hispanic Young Adult Sample

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Abstract

Clinicians and researchers alike benefit from the use of valid measures of depression in their work. Exploring the sensitivity of commonly available measures in underrepresented ethnic groups enhances the generalizability of their findings. Two specific measures—PRIME-MD and CES-D—are well established and are commonly used in settings with acute symptomatology. However, in non-clinical populations, the use of these measures has been limited. In this study, we compare the sensitivity of these measures in a Hispanic young adult sample. We test the hypothesis that PRIME-MD, a diagnostic tool for diagnosing depression, and the CES-D, a self-report measure, are equally sensitive to depressive symptomatology in a Hispanic young adult sample.

Methods

Participants: Five hundred and ten, drawn from a population of Hispanic young adults in the El Paso, Texas area, were included in the sample.

Measures: Two measures, the PRIME-MD (Spitzer et al., 1994) and the CES-D (Radloff, 1977), were used to assess current levels of depression in the general population. The measure considers four factors: depressed affect, positive affect, self-reported major depression, and scales to detect past depression.

Results

Discriminative validity of the PRIME-MD: The mean diagnosis for the PRIME-MD was 2.82 (SD = 3.52) and the CES-D mean was 14.47 (SD = 9.33). The mean difference was significant, t(498) = 11.95, p < 0.001. Sensitivity of the PRIME-MD to identify individuals with depressive symptoms was 82.4% (95% CI: 80.1%, 84.7%), and for the CES-D, 89.4% (95% CI: 87.2%, 91.5%).

Discussion

The CES-D performs better than the PRIME-MD in capturing depressive symptoms in Hispanic young adults. The CES-D may be a more sensitive measure in this population, and clinicians should consider the use of this measure in their practice.

Acknowledgments

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