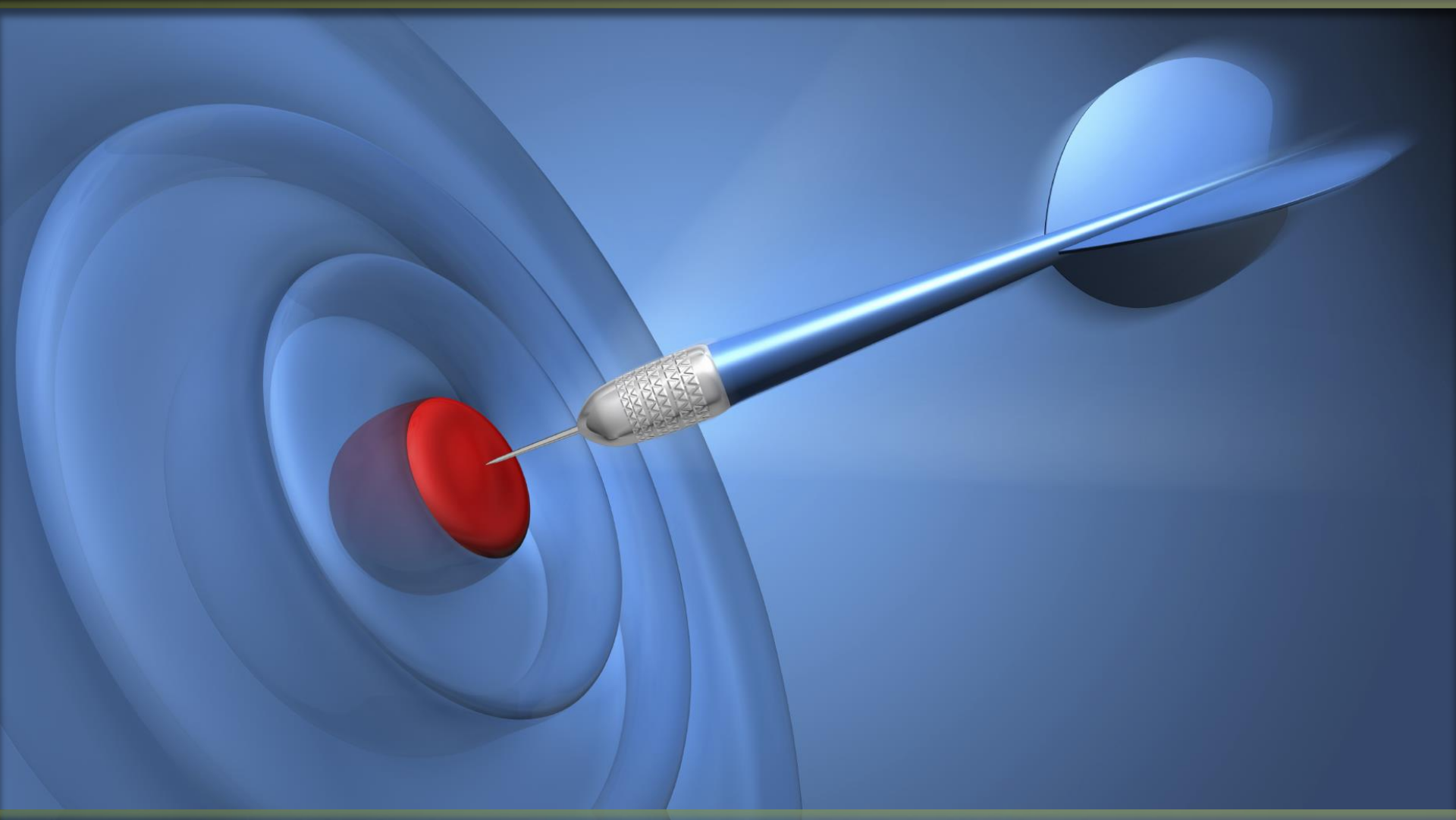


Measuring Stigma: A Cultural Adaptation of the Substance Abuse and Self-Stigma Scale in the Latino Population



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Study Objective: to translate and culturally adapt the Substance Abuse and Self-Stigma Scale in Puerto Rico

Study Significance

- Untreated substance use disorders (SUD) are associated with disability, unemployment, a host of other social problems, and extensive co morbid health conditions.
- SUD treatment reduces the likelihood of adverse health and social outcomes and improves adherence to Anti retroviral treatment for HIV. ART can significantly reduce viral transmission, morbidity, and mortality.



Study Significance

- Although adherence to treatment for SUD and HIV infection can be enhanced through a range of behavioral and pharmacologic interventions, the patient and therapist factors that moderate treatment retention and outcomes are poorly understood.
- This project lays the groundwork for studying interventions to reduce stigma associated with SUD and HIV and significantly increase treatment participation.



Study Significance

- Self-stigma refers to the drug users' devaluation, shame, and fear of enacted stigma (of being stigmatized by others) that emerge from identification with a stigmatized group and their resulting behavioral impact.
- The experiences of self-stigma among incarcerated individuals with SUD and HIV, and its impact on treatment entry, retention, and outcomes are not well understood.



Study Significance

- We propose an innovative research agenda that will allow us to contribute to the advancement of SUD treatments for Latinos under criminal justice supervision.
- Self-stigma is a modifiable attribute.
- If this project is successful, it will make possible a future proposal testing an intervention to reduce self-stigma among inmates with SUD/HIV, a population for which research on self-stigma is lacking





Substance Abuse Self-Stigma Scale

Substance Abuse Self-Stigma Scale (SASSS)

- The SASSS measures self-stigma experienced by people who have problem drug use.
- It is currently the only measure of self-stigma in addicted populations that examines this construct.
- The **Self-stigma construct** involves two types of cognitive content that have been identified in people with stigmatized conditions:
 - self-devaluation
 - fear of enacted stigma (fear of being judged or rejected)

Substance Abuse Self-Stigma Scale (SASSS)

- The authors constructed the SASSS to measure the two dimensions of self-stigma as well as its behavioral outcomes, which can result in delays in treatment seeking (experiential avoidance and disengagement from values).
- This dimensionality strengthens this measure and enhances its clinical applicability since one is able to capture changes in behavioral intentions resulting from interventions targeting self-stigma.
- SASSS subscales are: Shame and self-devaluation, Fear of enacted stigma, Experiential avoidance and Values disengagement due to stigma.



Pilot Testing the Instrument

Pilot Testing the Instrument

- A pilot test of the survey was conducted with 20 participants (SUD and SUD/HIV) from outpatient clinics.
- We conducted two separate focus groups and in depth – interviews, based on our interest in having a broad range of perspectives that are representative of diverse Spanish-speaking Latinos with SUD/HIV who live in Puerto Rico.
- The main two purposes were: (1) explore if there are difficulties in understanding and responding to the questions; (2) culturally embedded factors impacting self-stigma that may be unique to individual participants' cultural group.

Translation & Cultural Adaptation

- Cross-cultural Equivalence:
 - Semantic
 - Content
 - Technical



Main Results

Results

Response options – Self Devaluation Sub-scale:

- Never or almost never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

Results: Participant's Input on Some of the Items

- Item - People think I'm worthless if they know about my substance use history.
 - Response: "People think that because you used drugs they must be careful with you, you'll steal from them, when you get paid you'll use the money to buy drugs. Because you were what you were you'll never have the right to change or to be different. They don't see the situations/conditions that you lived in that made you choose that path."

Results: Participant's Input on Some of the Items

- Item - People without a substance use history could never really understand me.
 - Response: “People who have a healthy mental health (state) could never understand addiction. They can't understand you—maybe someone who has studied, yes. They don't understand that it is a disease... they think that you do it because you want. Few people could understand.”

Results: Participant's Input on Some of the Items

- Item - If someone were to find out about my history of substance use, they would doubt my character.
 - Responses: “If they would find out they would reject me. I could lose my family, my mom would be mad at me. I choose not to tell anyone. I hid myself so no one would know, not even my friends or my family.”
 - “I prefer to keep my diagnosis as a secret ... my pneumologist does not know... he doesn't understand why the medications don't work.”

Results: Participant's Input on Some of the Items

- Item - I'm willing to be in situations where I might feel different from others.
 - Response: "Sometimes I feel somewhat guilty, but it can happen to anyone. I try to avoid feeling uncomfortable so I can move on."

Discussion

- Cross-cultural research has demonstrated that when a different language is involved, translation and back-translation techniques are usually not sufficient to obtain cultural equivalency of the instrument (Geisinger 1994; Hilton and Skrutkowski 2002; Jones et al. 2001; Rogler 1999).
- We used a comprehensive process guided by a conceptual model (Flaherty 1987; Flaherty et al. 1988; Gaviria et al. 1985) which has been used in other studies and focuses on three dimensions of cross-cultural equivalence: semantic, content, and technical equivalence.
- Using qualitative methods with emphasis on content and semantic equivalence we obtained a culturally adapted measure which is relevant and responsive to our context.

Contributions

- Self-stigma is the psychological point of impact of society-wide stigma on the current lived experience of those labeled with stigmatized conditions such as: SUD and HIV. As such, it is potentially amenable to change.
- Self-stigma is a modifiable attribute.
- This study aspires to contribute to the progress of research on self-stigma among Latinos with SUD and HIV given the absence of appropriate measures for the construct.



Contributions

- This area of research is distinctive and innovative in light of the limited knowledge currently available on the role of self-stigma as a moderator of treatment outcomes for Spanish-speaking offenders with SUD and/or HIV.



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Thanks for
your
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