Resilience and Adolescent Health: An assessment of risks and assets in the Bañado Sur neighborhood of Asunción, Paraguay

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Project Background

• Literature on adolescent health and development is shifting focus from reducing pathology and negative outcomes towards a public health model of promoting positive development.
• Of particular importance in a global health context where youth development often occurs in environments with accumulated risk factors is the concept of resilience: the attainment of positive outcomes despite adverse circumstances and the process by which these unanticipated results are achieved.
• In public health practice, individuals manifesting resilience can be used to identify uncommon, culturally and contextually-specific behaviors and practices that can be used to improve public health outcomes using a positive deviance framework.

Population/Community

Adolescents in the Bañado Sur, a marginalized community on the outskirts of Asunción, Paraguay.

Project Timeframe

April-May 2012: Project development and preparation
June-August 2012: Data collection and fieldwork
September 2012 – April 2013: Full analysis of data, writing, and dissemination of results

Progress to date

• Administered questionnaire to a representative sample of 100 adolescents within Mil Solidarios
• Conducted 5 key informant interviews to identify adolescents for in-depth interviews
• Conducted 20 in-depth interviews with youths identified as resilient (12 Mil Solidarios students, 8 comparison from local high school)
• Performed descriptive analysis of quantitative data, ongoing transcription and coding of qualitative data
• Presented preliminary findings to the Instituto Nacional de Salud and Mil Solidarios

Next steps

• Perform in-depth analysis of collected data
• Construct final report of findings and tie to programmatic recommendations for Mil Solidarios
• Distribute results to Instituto Nacional de Salud

Project Goals

• Develop an understanding of youth resilience in the context of the Bañado Sur neighborhood of Asunción, Paraguay.
• Assess the relationships between resilient characteristics and risk and protective factors on adolescents’ behavioral- and sexual-health behaviors.
• Formulate contextually-specific recommendations for Mil Solidarios’ youth development programs using the positive deviance framework.

Methodology

• Quantitative survey (resilience measure, selected risk behaviors from YRBSS, and crosscutting risk and protective factors)
• Key informant interviews with adults who work directly with adolescents in the Bañado Sur
• In-depth interviews with youth who are identified as being particularly resilient, or positive deviants, in the community.

Project Partners

• Asociación Mil Solidarios
• Instituto Nacional de Salud, Asunción, Paraguay
• Karen Andes, PhD, Project Advisor
• Emory Global Health Institute