

**Pathways to Treatment: Mental Health Providers' Experiences with  
Latina/o Clients' Care Seeking**

**Researcher:**

Iran Barrera, Ph.D., M.S.W., Associate Professor  
Department of Social Work Education, Fresno State

**Introduction:**

Latinos are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States (U.S.); in fact, Latinos represent 16.7% of the total population and 20% of schoolchildren (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009).

**Background:**

A nationally representative U.S. Latina/o study, the National Latino and Asian American Study, highlights the mental health treatment needs of Latinos. This study reported that almost 30% of Latinos (28% men and 30% women) at some time in their life will suffer from a psychiatric disorder including depressive, anxiety and/or substance use disorders (Alegría, Mulvaney-Day, Torres, Polo, Cao, & Canino, 2007).

**Results:**

In practice, this continues to be a challenge given the underrepresentation of Latinos in the mental health field (Barrio et al., 2008; USDHHS, 2001; William & Kohut, 1999). These issues contribute to the mental health treatment disparities among Latinos (Alegría, Chatterji et al., 2008; USDHHS, 2001).