

## **UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSED MOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF A FAMILY-ORIENTED CULTURE**

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and Maria Montero y López-Lena**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the contribution of individual and family variables to depressive symptoms among youths in a family-centered culture. Participants were 262 Mexican adolescents (mean age = 15.9 years). At the individual level, gender (being female) and higher levels of perceived stressfulness of life events and ruminative coping style were correlated with higher frequency of depressive symptoms. At the family level, higher levels of perceived parental warmth and acceptance and parental monitoring were correlated with lower levels of depressed mood, whereas higher levels of parent-adolescent conflict were associated with greater frequency of depressive symptoms. Regression analyses confirmed our prediction that both individual factors (gender, ruminative coping) and family factors (parental warmth and parental monitoring) would make unique contributions to depressive symptoms. The model comprised of individual and family variables accounted for 50% of the variance in depressed mood. Moreover, parental warmth and acceptance attenuated the impact of ruminative coping style on adolescents' depressive symptomatology. Findings are discussed in relation to previous research on adolescents in another family-centered culture (China), and directions for future research are proposed.

Depressed mood has been described as a common experience during adolescence (Steinberg, 1999). For example, studies using community samples in the U.S. found that about 25% to 35% of adolescent boys and 25% to 40% of adolescent girls experienced depressive symptoms in the previous six months (Compas, Ey, & Grant, 1993; Petersen, Compas, Brooks-Gunn, Stemmler, Ey, & Grant, 1993). The presence of frequent, moderate symptoms of depression in children and adolescents has been found to have a negative impact on school performance and peer relationships (Merikangas & Angst, 1995; Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1992). Longitudinal studies have further shown a tendency toward stability of depressive symptoms across at least

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