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# Reaching Hispanic Construction Workers: The *¡Ponte Listo!* Project



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# The *¡Ponte Listo!* Team



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# A Fundamental Problem Laid Bare

**Overlapping Vulnerabilities:**  
The Occupational Health and Safety  
of Young Immigrant Workers  
in Small Construction Firms

A collage of five photographs showing construction workers in various settings: a woman in a yellow hard hat on a phone, a worker on a roof, a worker with a level, a woman in a white blazer and yellow hard hat, and a worker with a measuring tape.

NIOSH and ASSE Report • May 2015

Logos for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, OSHA, CDC, NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health), and ASSE (Associated Builders and Contractors).

- Poorest health outcomes in
  - Latino Workers
  - Small Operations
  - Young Workers







# Explanations for Latinos' Excess Risk

- Speed trumps safety
  - Incentivized by piece rate compensation
  - Financial obligations
  - Few job options
    - I have to work fast so that I don't lose this job to someone who will work faster/harder.





# A Translational R2P Design



## Formative

Conduct In-Depth Interviews

- Contractors
- Workers
- Family Members

Analyze & Extract Themes reflecting “leverage points” for intervention



## Intervention Development

Develop Lesson Materials

- Photonovela-like stories and art
- Engage workers in story development
- Draft interactive facilitator guides/implementation manuals



## Intervention Evaluation

Attention-Placebo RCT Design

- Worker only
- Contractor-enhanced
- Family-enhanced
- TAU



# Illustrative Results from the Formative Stage

- Goal – Understand why speed at work is preeminent over safety, to inform intervention materials useful in the small-scale residential construction sector.
- Aims
  - Describe Latino workers' and contractors' attributions of common construction injuries, including fatalities
  - Compare and contrast workers and contractors' attributions for common injuries to identify points of synergy and divergence to be leveraged for effective intervention.



# Method

- Phase I of sequential mixed-method design
- In-depth interviews following a semi-structured interview guide.
- N=22
  - Contractors, n=10;  $M_{Age}=35.3$ ;  
 $M_{YrsUS}=15.3$ ;  $M_{YrsCon}=12.7$
  - Workers, n=12;  $M_{Age}=31.2$ ;  $M_{YrsUS}=10.5$ ;  
 $M_{YrsCon}=8.1$
- Grounded theory with thematic analysis





# Contractors Perspectives: 2 Dominant Themes

## Theme #1 – That’s Just the Way We Are

Money Motivated

Substance Use

They Don’t Listen

*People **don't want to be careful** (emphasis added) at work. They don't see that wearing protective equipment helps them in case they have an accident. They feel it hinders them at work. And since **we get paid** (emphasis added) according to what we do during the day, we don't use it.*  
(C1)

*Another problem  
Latinos are very smart  
want to do things  
We want to*

*Well, patrons [general contractors] have to be more aware of the situation. If they want the job done quickly, they have to provide all the necessary equipment. Also, we, as [sub] contractors, have to have all the materials and equipment ready before we start the job. (C2)*

## Theme #2 – Insufficient Equipment







# Workers Perspectives: 3 Dominant Themes

## Theme #1 – We are Careless!

We don't think about safety

Earning money comes first.

Fast work = more money.

Safety slows you down.

*I've seen that Latino contractors take jobs for less money than Americans do. And since they're getting paid less, they have to work very fast to be able to earn money.*

## Theme #3 – We're Pressured to Produce

## Theme #2 – Contractors Lack Equipment

*production. (W1)*

*working. Instead of using a 2 x 6, we used a plywood structure. So, we were able to walk freely. (W4)*





# Comparing & Contrasting

## Similarities

- Little value for safety
- Earning money is more important than safety
  - Safety impedes efficient work → earnings
- Lack of appropriate equipment

## Differences

- Carelessness
  - Character flaw (contractors)
  - Naivete (workers)
- Safety training
  - Unnecessary (contractors)
  - Might help (workers)
- Working fast
  - Competitive bids (contractors)
  - Pressured to produce (workers)



# Summary

- Immigrant Latino workers and contractors share attributions for work injury.
- Interventions in this sector must recognize that immediate earnings is more important than safety.
  - Contractors bidding practices exaggerate the focus of fast work; they operate on volume.
- Interventions must target both contractors and workers



# Illustrative Results from the Developmental Stage





# Illustrative Results from the Evaluation Stage

