The objective of this study was to investigate the association exposure to violence, drugs and alcohol has in shaping the psychosocial and behavioral profiles of Mexican American adolescents of low socioeconomic status. A cross-sectional study was conducted in which 881 Mexican-American adolescents described their exposure to violence, drugs, and alcohol, while their parents responded to a questionnaire about their children's behavioral, emotional, and social problems. Participant information was extracted from electronic record databases maintained in six university-based clinics in El Paso, Texas on the U.S. side of the border with Mexico. A total of 463 (52.6%) adolescents reported they had not been exposed to violence, alcohol, or drugs. The remaining 418 (47.4%) adolescents indicated only a single category of exposure: violence (25.1%), alcohol (24.9%), or drugs (8.6%). In addition, some adolescents reported combined exposure to violence and alcohol (13.4%), alcohol and drugs (14.6%), or violence, alcohol, and drugs (13.4%). The association between combined exposure to violence, drugs, and/or alcohol and the psychosocial and behavioral profiles of these Mexican-American adolescents showed an increased risk of emotional and behavioral problems. Little is known about the mental health of Mexican Americans who are exposed to alcohol, violence, and drugs, especially adolescents living in poverty in neighborhoods along the U.S.–Mexico border, who are at a high risk for these exposures. These findings highlight the risks associated with adolescent exposure to violence, drugs, and alcohol and the need for effective interventions within this subgroup of Mexican-American youth and their families.

Keywords
Adolescents, exposure to violence, exposure to drugs, exposure to alcohol.