The Dominican Republic has a population of over 10 million, from which an estimated 20% fall within the age range of 10 to 19 years old (OECD, 2012). The provision of education, particularly for Dominican youth, has been established as a long-term social and economic priority at the government level (OECD, 2012; Pimentel, 2002). Nevertheless, research suggests that education and health management in the Dominican Republic have been historically inadequate and insufficient (Schumacher, 2010; Vargas-Lundius, 1991). Further research is warranted to better understand Dominican students’ mental health experiences as they attempt to succeed in formal learning environments (Schumacher, 2010).

Furthermore, psychological distress in college settings has been deemed a major challenge for students and higher education institutions alike (Baader et al., 2014; Gutiérrez Rodas et al., 2010; Kitzrow, 2009; Ross et
al., 1999). Despite scholarly evidence that more and more students could benefit from accessing mental health services, low help-seeking rates continue to resurface in the literature (American College Health Association, 2009; Demyan & Anderson, 2012; Eisenberg et al., 2007). Previous findings suggest the likely interference of self- and social stigma in individuals’ attitudes and intentions to seek psychological care for experiences of distress (Lienemann et al., 2013; Satcher, 2000; Vogel et al., 2013b).

Through the use of six measures and quantitative analyses, this study explores Dominican college students’ \( (n = 280) \) experiences of psychological distress, help-seeking attitudes, help-seeking intentions, self-stigma, and social stigma toward seeking psychological services. Findings reveal that from 47% males and 53% females, traditional-aged (86%), under-class (65%) college students with predominant affiliation to Health Sciences (36%) or Engineering (36%), about 71% \( (n = 200) \) experience moderate levels of distress, 74% \( (n = 207) \) have neutral help-seeking attitudes, and 67% \( (n = 188) \) hold moderate help-seeking intentions, mostly toward family or friends. Additionally, 74% \( (n = 206) \) of participants present moderate levels of self-stigma, and 76% \( (n = 212) \) report moderate levels of social stigma toward psychological services.

Moreover, there are significant bivariate correlations among this study’s main variables, with the exception of distress. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) supports main effects of gender, age, and area of academic study on the main variables. Post-hoc tests reveal multiple group differences for academic area of study related to psychological distress and help-seeking attitudes. Likely one of the first studies of its kind in the Dominican Republic, this research contributes data on Dominican college students and mental health considerations, with implications for improved practice and research. Future studies on distress, help-seeking and stigma with Dominican college students are encouraged overall.