

AFRICAN IMMIGRANT MENTAL HEALTH IN CANADA

Jess Omorodion

Supervisor: Professor Michael Haan

Agenda

What this presentation includes

- Abstract
- Why is it important?
- What do we know so far?
- Barriers / Obstacles
- Available Data / Next Steps
- Current Recommendations

Abstract

African immigrants are the fastest growing immigrant population in Canada. However, they are still extremely under-researched especially in regards to their understandings and experiences with mental health. This is important to look at due to the stark differences between Canadian African views on mental health. Current literature shows that while African immigrants are self-reporting as having above average mental health, there are still taboos and discriminatory concerns that exist as a barrier to transparency with it. This research will utilize the Stata software to analyze the Canadian Community Health Survey (2017) to further look at African mental health in order to compare their self-reported opinions of their mental health with potential mental health symptoms. There will also be recommendations for areas on where further research could take place and policy changes to address the taboo of mental health with African immigrants.

Why is it important?

African immigrants are a fastly growing

African immigrants are the fastest growing immigrant group in Canada but are still severely underresearched in comparison to other immigrant groups (i.e. Chinese immigrants)

Stark cultural differences

Mental health is still extremely stigmatized in various African countries. African immigrants likely are experiencing are culture shock as their communtieis see someone as either "normal" (mentally well) or "crazy" (suffering from mental illness

The effect on second-generation African immigrants

The current understanding and attitudes about mental health does not solely affect the African immigrant. It also affects the attitudes and persepectives of their children (or minors they are in ceare of) which will directly affect how mental health is contrinued to be understood across Canada

What do we know so far?

(Spoiler: Not a lot)

- Immigrants, including African, tend to rate their level of mental health higher than the non-immigrant Canadian population
- There is not an in-depth research into how accurate that is
- Cultural taboos increase hesitancy in being transparent about mental health



Barriers / Obstacles

- **Cultural Sensitivity Training**
- **Cultural Taboos**
- **Race Based Discrimination**

Available Data / Next Steps

Data Analysis

**Canadian Community
Health Survey 2017**



Current Future Reccomendations



**Better communication
with African cultural
sensitivity training**



**Research on second
generation
immigrants**



**Specific focus on
African mental health**

Thank you!

Feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.

Email Address

jomorodi@uwo.ca

Citations

Alaazi, D., Ahola, A., Okeke-Ihejirika, P., Yohani, S., Vallianatos, H., Salami, B. (2020-ePub). Immigrants and the Western media: a critical discourse analysis of newspaper framings of African immigrant parenting in Canada. Journal of Ethnic and Migration.

Immigrant, refugee, ethnocultural and racialized populations and the social determinants of health: A review of 2016 census data. (2019). Mental Health Commission of Canada. https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2019-03/irer_report_mar_2019_eng.pdf

Mason, A., Salami, B., Salma, J., Yohani, S., Amin, M. Okeke-Ihejirika, P., & Ladha, T. (2020). Health Information Seeking Among Immigrant Families in Western Canada. Journal of Pediatric Nursing. 2(58):9-14

Salami, B., Salma, J., & Hegadoren, K. (2019). Access and utilization of mental health services for immigrants and refugees: Perspectives of immigrant service providers. International journal of mentalhealth nursing, 28(1), 152–161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12512>

Woodgate, R. L., Busolo, D. S., Crockett, M., Dean, R. A., Amaladas, M. R., & Plourde, P. J. (2017). A qualitative study on African immigrant and refugee families' experiences of accessing primary health care services in Manitoba, Canada: it's not easy!. International journal for equity in health, 16(1), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-016-0510-x>

Yohani, S., Salami, S., Alaazi, D., Okeke-Ihejirika, P., Vallianatos, H., Tetreault, B., Nsaliwa, B. (2019) “If You Say You Have Mental Health Issues, Then You Are Mad”: Perceptions of Mental Health in the Parenting Practices of African Immigrants in Canada. Canadian Ethnic Studies 52(3): 47-66.