

Promoting a Culture of Health: Exploring Mental Health Stigma and Protective Factors in the Somali American Community

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Presented by Christian Morfaw, MD
Psychiatry Resident, University of Minnesota

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- None

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Outline

- Learning objectives
- Introduction
- Research points
- Practice points
- Conclusion
- Q&A
- References

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Learning objectives

- Appreciate magnitude/nature of stigma surrounding mental illness and MH treatments within the Somali American community
- Be more mindful of the gap between the current model of access to MH services and other worldviews to provide culturally-appropriate care

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Introduction 1

- Serious health inequities in Somali Community
- Estimated 14% -50% Somali immigrant population affected by CMD vs 8.4 % general US pop affected by depression and 3.6 affected by PTSD
- 8% Somali children and adolescents seek MH services vs 50-78% U.S
- Make up 21% of the total foreign-born population in Minnesota
- High MH needs
- Severe psychological trauma, depression, SI 2/2 civil war exposure, food shortages, racism, prejudice in U.S.

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Introduction 2

- Hypothesize stigma one of most significant barriers to seeking/accessing MH services
- Mental functioning: being sane, insane, or possessed by evil spirit
- Perceptions of MI influenced by generational folktales and perceived faith adherence
- Quran, paired with prayer, oftentimes first line of treatment

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Introduction 3

- Disconnect b/n Somali cultural practices and Western medicine models aggravates already detrimental effect that stigma has on seeking care
- Isolating intersection between cultural beliefs, faith, immigration status, and race in a society where treatment systems essentially designed for white European-Americans
- To date, no research exploring the dynamic relationship between MH stigma and protective factors in the Somali American community and the impact on MH service utilization.

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Research point 1: Purpose

- Purpose: challenge unspoken assumption that current model of access to MH services able to meet growing needs of Somali Americans with MI.
- Question:
 - How do stigma and protective factors influence perceptions of MH and health-seeking behavior in the Somali American Community?
 - What interventions could help Somali Americans better recognize—and more readily seek help for—their MI symptoms?

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Research point 2: Methods

- CBPA with mixed-methods design
- Partner with SoLaHmo
- Quantitative survey
- Photovoice and in-depth interviews

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Research point 3: Methods

- 36 months
- Four phases
- Phase 1:
 - pilot project culturally validate a MH questionnaire
 - CAB
- Phase 2: photovoice project and a survey
- Phase 3: completion and evaluation of a culturally appropriate stigma reduction intervention
- Phase 4: dissemination of findings

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Practice point 1: Implications of findings

For the Somali American community

- Inform a culturally appropriate stigma reduction intervention
- Anticipated outcomes
 - Increased knowledge about common MH disorders within the community
 - Reduced MH help-seeking-related stigma
 - Increased self-efficacy and communal support for timely help-seeking of MH services

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Practice points: Implications of findings

For practitioners

- Inform culturally-appropriate MH practices in clinical and community MH service settings

For policymakers

- Provide needed evidence for implementing policies that can reduce barriers to MH care

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Conclusion

- Imperative to systematically and thoughtfully examine perceptions of MH and protective factors among Somali American community members
- Reduce cultural gap in access and utilization of MH services

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Core research team

- Sophia Vinogradov, MD, Co-PI, Chair, Department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, UMN
- Shannon Pergament, MPH, MSW, Co-PI, SoLaHmo
- Jonas Attilus, MD, MPH, Resident, Department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, UMN
- Brittney Mengistu PhD, MPH, postdoctoral researcher, lecturer at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Clara Godoy-Henderson LSW, a clinical research coordinator in Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota
- Foos Afey and Amran Ahmed, community investigators, SoLaHmo

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Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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