

Factors Influencing Arabs' Attitudes toward Mental Health Care and their Intentions to Seek Mental Health Services: A Systematic Review



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Background

Arabs living in the United States may face stressors and difficulties that may affect their mental health. However, research has shown that they are less likely to seek professional mental health treatment. One way to bridge the gap is to understand and identify the barriers to seeking help.

Purpose

The purpose of this systematic review was to pinpoint factors that impact Arab attitudes toward mental health care and their willingness to seek it.

Study Design

A systematic review was conducted looking at peer-reviewed articles discussing Arabs' intention to seek mental health services and their attitudes towards mental health care. To determine Arab attitudes and intentions towards mental health care, researchers utilized three domains (CINAHL, PubMed, and PsycINFO) to search for peer-reviewed articles published before June 2020. To be included, articles had to be peer-reviewed, written in English, and had to specifically address Arab adults' attitudes toward mental health care or intention to seek care. Researchers found 26 peer reviewed articles eligible and included them in the systematic review.

Definitions

The Socio-ecological Model suggests that behaviors are shaped by multiple layers of factors, not just individual choices and personality traits. There are five levels in this model: individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and public policy. By addressing the multiple influences that occur at each of these different levels, this model can aid in developing a holistic approach to addressing behaviors.

Results

Factors that affect mental health under-utilization by Arabs were identified using the eligible 26 articles. The socio-ecological model was used to classify factors associated with attitudes towards mental health care and intentions to seek mental health care (Figure 1). At the individual level, associated factors were age education, and religion. At the interpersonal level, associated factors were family's role and support. At the community level, associated factors were cultural norms and religion's role. Lastly, at the organizational level, associated factors were lack of resources and mistrust of providers. In addition, mutual factors associated with attitudes towards mental health care and intentions to seek were gender norms, stigma, negative beliefs, misconceptions, and economic status (Figure 1).

Socio-ecological Model

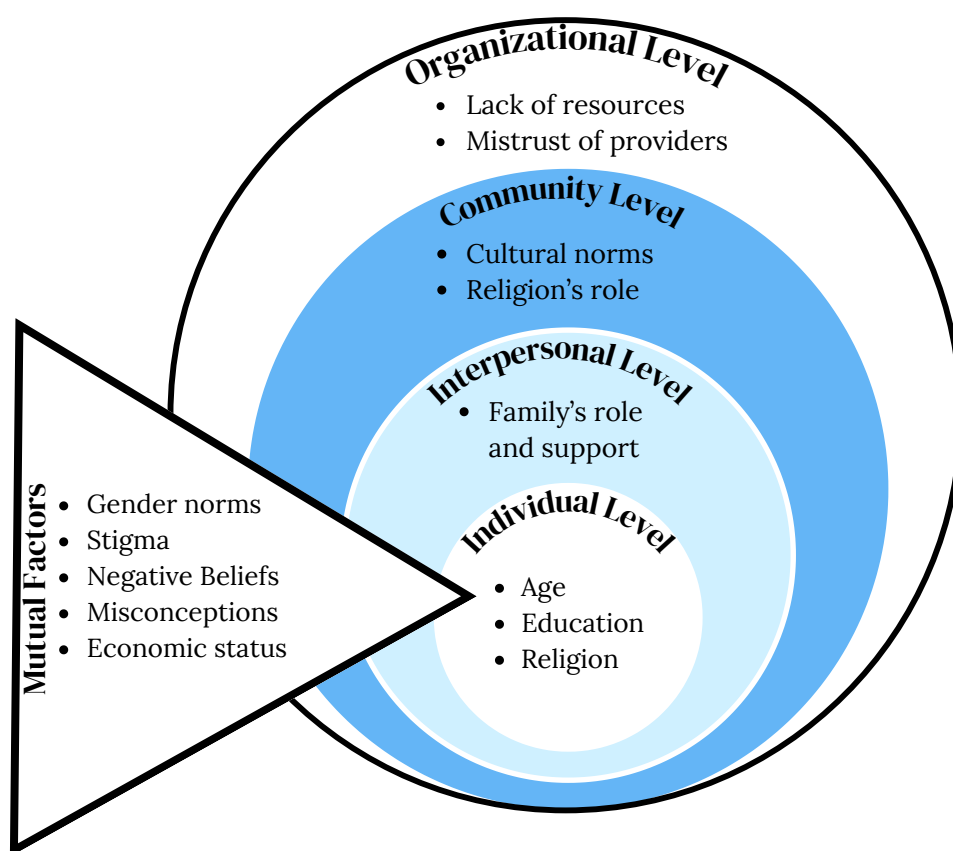


Figure 1: Factors that influence Arabs' utilization of mental health care by level of the socio-ecological model.

Conclusion

- Psychiatric-mental health nurses may use these factors to develop strategies to increase and promote Arab utilization of mental health services. An increase in mental health care utilization may help relieve the impact on Arab mental health.
- Future research is necessary to investigate how the identified factors in each socio-economic level impact Arabs' intention to seek mental health services.

References

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513