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Objective

To investigate barriers to mental health treatment services faced by immigrant communities in San Diego County.

Introduction

Immigrants often face challenges that greatly hinder their ability to receive adequate mental health support including language barriers, cultural differences, stigma, and limited access to healthcare resources¹. Prior research indicates that economic stability, health care knowledge, and stigma are significant obstacles to mental health treatment in the immigrant population². Mental health stigma and the perceived understanding of what mental health is can also prevent immigrants from accessing care. The results may contribute to existing research on mental health disparities among immigrant populations and inform the creation of culturally sensitive, accessible mental health services tailored to immigrants' unique needs.

1. Ali, D. (ed.). *Mental Health Services for Immigrants in the United States: A systematic review*. Psychiatric Services (Washington, D.C.). <https://pubs.psychiatrists.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.2016.67.10.1000>

2. Padman, A., Gattuso, D., Hinton, L. M., Hurdman, C., Sullivan, M., Rodriguez, D. S., Lopez, E. J., Mera, S., Yacenta-Castillo, V., Salas, L. M., Maman, N., Williams, R., Figueroa, J. F., Cheng, C., Flynn, M. A., Rodriguez-Garcia, J. J., Simpson, N. W., Schumm, C. A., Yafolla, C., ... Yonke, W. A. (2022, August 17). "The One Left Behind": A social determinant of health lens on the wellbeing of undocumented immigrants. *Careless Opinions in Psychology*. <https://www.socsciresearch.com/news/articles/9252522/90229017627na7a3d3dab>

Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered using a survey (Google Forms) which contained:

- Know someone that identifies as an immigrant
- Age group
- Speaks a language aside from English
- Sought out mental health treatment
- Perceived mental health barriers: stigma, language barrier, cost and insurance, cultural competence, transportation, understanding of mental health, limited access to care, denial, lack of time, afraid of what might happen, unsure about where to seek help, none, and other

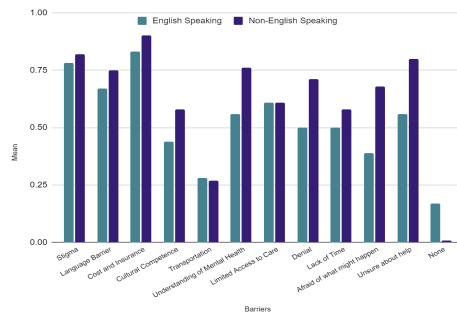
Analysis:

- One-Sample T-Test was used for quantitative statistical analysis
- Qualitative data were analyzed for meaningful quotes and themes

Qualitative Results: Participant Stories

- "I would say it is extremely **courageous** for someone to **admit** they are having mental problems and are seeking help."
- "If someone says they need a therapist to help cope, you are automatically judged and told "why if you aren't **crazy**?"
- "It's **difficult** for me to find a therapist/psychiatrist who **understands my background** and community."
- "Accessing treatment when you are an immigrant is a **burden** on the family; it is **too expensive**."

Effect of Language on Barriers to Healthcare: English vs Non-English Speakers

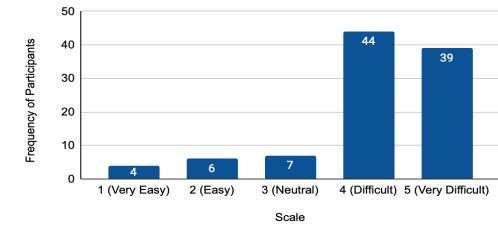


All barriers were over 0.05 two-sided p values meaning there was no significant difference between English vs. Non-English speakers.

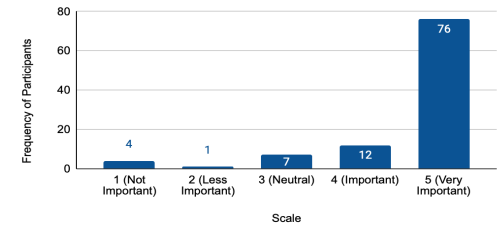
Quantitative Results: Demographics

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Arabic	4	0.90%
Armenian	6	0.90%
ASL (American Sign Language)	7	3.50%
Chinese (multiple dialects)	44	24.60%
Farsi	39	1.80%
Español (Spanish)	44	51.80%
French	7	1.80%
Indonesian	12	0.90%
Japanese	12	1.80%
Korean	7	4.40%
Newari	7	0.90%
Portuguese	12	0.90%
Russian	7	0.90%
Tagalog	7	2.60%
Vietnamese	7	2.60%
Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-23	44	58.80%
24-30	12	17.50%
31-40	7	5.20%
41-50	7	4.10%
51-60	7	5.20%
61+	7	9.30%

How difficult do you think it is for immigrants to access mental health treatment in your community?



How important do you think mental health treatment is for the overall well-being of the immigrant community?



Conclusion

There was no statistically significant differences found among all the perceived barrier variables tested ($p > 0.05$) within English and Non-English speakers. T-tests may have failed to achieve significance due to the small sample size and limited cell size for each perceived barrier identified.

The perceived barriers of mental health treatment most apparent amongst all age groups were insurance/cost, stigma, language, and unsure where to seek help.

Policy Recommendations

- ✓ Funding to Federally Qualified Health Centers to provide mental health services at a lower cost
- ✓ Further funding to Medicare/Medicaid to cover mental health care services

Acknowledgements

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Effect of Age on Barriers to Mental Health: Immigrant vs Non-Immigrant

