2017-05-11

The Benefits of Culturally Adapted Mental Health Treatments: A Meta-Analysis

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Valladares, Juan; Coenen, Madeleine; Herrera, Niyeli; and Kim, Yoojin, "The Benefits of Culturally Adapted Mental Health Treatments: A Meta-Analysis" (2017). FHSS Mentored Research Conference. 334.  
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The Benefits of Culturally Adapted Mental Health Treatments: A Meta-Analysis

By: Juan Valladares, Madeleine Coenen, Niyeli Herrera and Yoojin Kim
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Background
Cultural values, ideas, beliefs and worldviews may affect the way a mental intervention is received and therefore how effective it is.

Historically, research has not focused on cultural minorities and these groups tend to have poorer success rates in treatments. (Gonzalez et al., 2010).

The purpose of this meta-analysis is to establish the aggregate effect of those mental health interventions that have been adapted to clients’ cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

Methodology
Inclusion criteria: published and non-published studies, with North American samples, using experimental or quasi-experimental designs, comparing at least one group to a cultural treatment.

Data coding: cultural elements were coded by teams of 2+, each article was coded independently twice.

All statistics transformed to Cohen’s $d$, averaged across studies.

Search terms used: culture specific, ethnic specific, racially sensitive, accounting for culture, culturally informed, cultural inclusion, etc.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Cultural Adaptations in the Treatments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
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</table>

Descriptive Information
- 79 total studies
- 8,620 participants
- 55% female
- Average age of 24.4

Overall results
The mean effect size of culturally adapted treatments $d = .47$

Effect Size in Comparison

Discussion
Results showed that it did not matter how the treatment was adapted as much as if the treatment was adapted (now verified for the fourth time).

Counselors should focus attention on the cultural values and worldviews of their clients.

Culturally adapted mental health therapies are moderately superior to those that do not explicitly incorporate cultural considerations and should be considered evidence-based practices.

2017 Update
16 New articles have been identified as meeting criteria to include in this meta-analysis.

14 other articles are currently being examined to see if they also meet criteria.

References