

YAZIDI REFUGEES AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN CANADA: PERSPECTIVES ON MENTAL HEALTH, COPING STRATEGIES AND BARRIERS TO CARE

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Background: The Yazidi people are a resilient, Kurdish religious minority group. Since 2014, when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) announced an Islamic Caliphate, there are estimates that more than 7,000 Yazidi people have been killed. High rates of mental health comorbidity are documented in Yazidis living in displacement camps and refugee receiving countries. In the context of COVID-19, Yazidi survivors now face further isolation.

The complexity of trauma the Yazidi people have endured, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a poor understanding of Yazidi illness belief models, create challenges to providing holistic care. A limited understanding of the Yazidi's preferred coping strategies, and of their perceived barriers to care, contribute to challenges faced by care providers.

Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of Yazidi refugees' perspectives on mental health
2. To explore what the perceived barriers of Yazidi refugees are to receiving mental health care
3. To investigate preferred coping strategies of Yazidi refugees
4. To identify what the perceived barriers are of mental health service providers to providing care to Yazidi refugees

Methods: A qualitative phenomenological research study was conducted. Two focus groups were comprised of Yazidi refugee women, and one was comprised of mental health service providers. Focus groups explored Yazidi women's collective beliefs about mental health and the care they receive. A focus group with care providers gathered providers' perspectives for comparison.

Results: Thematic content analysis will be conducted. Results will address knowledge gaps and unveil strategies for delivering culturally sensitive mental health care.

Discussion: This study is the first known qualitative study exploring Yazidi refugees' perspectives on mental health, their preferred coping strategies, and the barriers to receiving mental health care in a Canadian context. Furthermore, findings will provide insight into providing culturally sensitive mental health care to future refugee populations.

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Participants will be able to acquire further insight into the mental health of Yazidi refugees post migration
2. Participants will be able to identify individual and system level barriers to providing mental health services to culturally diverse populations

References

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