

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF FIRST EPISODE PSYCHOSIS AND PATHWAYS TO CARE FOR SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN USING EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR PSYCHOSIS IN MONTREAL

Negin Zamani, BSc
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

Background: First episode psychosis (FEP) refers to new onset psychotic symptoms. The condition requires extensive supportive and therapeutic resources as FEP brings about a whole array of challenges impacting social, academic, and vocational aspects of life. The underrepresentation of female patients in FEP studies has led to a lack of knowledge about their mental health needs during early psychosis. South Asian women constitute a sizeable number of North Americans and deserve special attention to sociocultural factors that may frame and shape their psychosis experience.

Objectives: This study aims to elucidate key cultural aspects of the experience of first episode psychosis for South Asian women using early psychosis intervention services in Montreal.

Methods: This participatory action research project will be conducted within an ethnographic framework. Referred South Asian women and their families will be recruited. Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the families to investigate their attitudes and needs. Additionally, the McGill Illness Narrative Interview (MINI) will be administered to document the experiences of South Asian women with early psychosis.

Results: Anticipated factors affecting the psychosis experience in South Asian women will include stigma, spirituality, gender roles, and traditional therapies. The study findings will provide cultural information about these aspects of psychosis as experienced by South Asian women and their families and will shed light on their unique needs in cultural context.

Implications: Women in general, and South Asian women in particular, are under-represented in studies of first episode psychosis. This study will bring the experiences of South Asian women to light as they learn to live with psychotic disorders, and in the process will inform cross-cultural clinical practice and future research investigations.

Full List of Authors

Negin Zamani, G. Eric Jarvis, Alessandra Miklavcic

Learning Objectives

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

1. The participants will be able to identify barriers and challenges experienced by South Asian women with FEP and their families.

2. The participants will be able to recognize the sociocultural factors that impact the treatment of and recovery from FEP among South Asian women.

References

Fusar-Poli, P., McGorry, P. D., & Kane, J. M. (2017). Improving outcomes of first-episode psychosis: An overview. *World Psychiatry, 16*(3), 251–265. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20446>

Moller, N., Burgess, V., & Jogiyat, Z. (2016). Barriers to counselling experienced by British South Asian women: A thematic analysis exploration. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 16*(3), 201–210. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12076>