

# **SUICIDE AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF FAITH AND MENTAL HEALTH: UNDERSTANDING SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR AND DISTRESS IN YOUNG MUSLIM CANADIANS**

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Background: Most major mental illnesses onset during adolescence and young adulthood. Young Muslims in Canada may be particularly vulnerable, due to low rates of accessing mental health care, negotiating identities and expectations across cultures, and experiences of discrimination and Islamophobia. Pilot data from our team has demonstrated high rates of suicidal behaviour in immigrants from several Muslim-majority countries (MMCs).

Objective 1: Determine patterns of suicide deaths, suicide behaviours and related health care utilization among young immigrants from Muslim-majority countries

Objective 2: Explore the experiences and meanings of suicidal behaviours among young Muslims (15-24) in the Greater Toronto Area

Methods:

a) This is a population-based cohort study using routinely collected data from health, immigration, and administrative datasets (2003-2018) housed and linked at ICES. Participants: All youth (10-24 years) who immigrated to and were living in Ontario (n = ~18,000 new immigrants per year) between 2003 and 2017 with an immigration record from one of 48 MMC (defined as having a percentage of Muslims 50% or higher) and youth living in Ontario and born to mothers with immigration records from an MMC will be investigated.

b) For the qualitative arm, 15 young Muslims (15-24 years) will be interviewed using a life history approach. Analysis will be conducted using constructivist grounded theory.

At this time, 9 interviews have been conducted and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is underway.

Implications: Our pioneering approach combines innovative population-level investigation with in-depth qualitative analysis of the lived experiences of Muslim youth with a history of suicidal behaviour, providing critical context for developing appropriate and effective suicide prevention approaches to serve this population.

Full List of Authors

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Learning Objectives

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

1. Identify patterns of suicide deaths and behaviours among young immigrants or children of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries.
2. Discover and explore narratives of distress and help-seeking among young Muslim Canadians with a history of suicidal behaviours.