

# **NARRATIVE, MEANINGS AND CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN PSYCHIATRY**

Bipin Ravindran, MBBS, MD, FRANZCP  
Univeristy of Newcastle  
Newcastle, Australia

## **Background:**

The exploration of active meaning making through narratives in the cross-cultural context of clinical encounters can have a powerful effect of linking together individual phenomenologies, their social positioning and the socio-political issues of the current environment.

## **Aims:**

To understand the experience of psychiatric care for persons from culturally diverse backgrounds in terms of the meanings they generate about their illness experience and treatment encounters with mental health clinicians and psychiatric systems (institutional structures of psychiatry).

## **Methods:**

The research uses Narrative Interviewing, a culturally sensitive qualitative research method, to interview around 15 participant triads about their experiences of illness and treatment. Each participant triad includes a person with experience of mental health treatment from culturally diverse background ( born overseas from a non-English speaking country ), their primary support person or family member, and their clinician. The research is being conducted in a regional health district of NSW in Australia.

Data analysis is done through an inductive thematic method involving identification of themes and categorising themes arising from the data collected. The research project has current ethics approval from Hunter New England Human Research Ethics Committee.

## **Potential Outcomes:**

Through data analysis of the intersecting narratives of persons from multicultural backgrounds and key individuals involved in their personal and treatment worlds, potential outcomes will be the developing of a better understanding of how the meanings generated by the various members of the clinical encounter (patient, family or support person and clinician) engage and correspond with each other.

## **Implications:**

Studying the interactive processes of meanings and conceptualisations of patients, clinicians and family in the cross-cultural context of clinical encounters, as opposed to only eliciting illness narratives, could provide a potentially deeper understanding of the dynamic aspects of culture, especially in relation to identities, positioning and the intersections of society and the individual.

## **Full List of Authors:**

Bipin Ravindran, Daniela Heil, Brian Kelly

## Learning Objectives

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

1. Describe how narratives in clinical encounters in psychiatry connect phenomenologies, cultural identities and social positioning.
2. Apply the findings from research in cultural psychiatry to clinical practice in working with culturally diverse populations.