Effects of decision-making role changes on perceived stress among Syrian refugee parents resettling in Ontario, Canada.

The ongoing refugee crisis has been an increasingly prominent global issue continuously at record highs. To date, Syria has the highest number of refugees worldwide due to war-related political conflicts (UNHCR, 2019). In recent years, Canada has adopted the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative (SRRI), where 25,000 Syrian refugees settled in Canada between 2015 to 2016 (Government of Canada, 2019).

Within the process of undergoing acculturation in the host society, the family unit is faced with intergenerational cultural conflict enforcing family members to potentially adapt new roles and behaviours (Porterfield, Akinsulure-smith, Benson, Betancourt, & Ellis, 2010). Research shows that in general Syrian cultural concepts for family dynamics is patriarchal, where the father or oldest male has the most authority in the household and is expected to be financially responsible for the family (van Eijk, 2016). However, studies have shown that Syrian refugee women who migrate to other countries undergo the most fundamental shift as the primary financial supporter in their family, thus overcoming traditional gender role barriers (Asaf, 2017; CARE International UK, 2019). LITTLE is known whether decision making roles change after migration and the effect of such change on the mental health of the refugees.

The present study aims to (1) Explore and identify factors related to shared decision-making role changes among Syrian Refugee parents after resettling in Canada; and (2) Investigate the relationship between shared decision-making role changes and perceived stress. The study consisted of 155 Syrian refugee parents who resettled in the Greater Toronto Area after 2015. The inclusion criteria included being above 16 years of age and having at least one child that was at the time of the interview under four years of age. Participants were recruited between May and October 2019. Shared decision-making role changes was assessed for 1) major life decision, 2) financial decisions, and 3) day-to-day decisions with each having the following categories: change to shared decision-making role post migration, non-shared decision-making role post migration, and shared decision-making role pre and post migration. Stress level was assessed using Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermeinstein, 1983). For the seminar, the preliminary results of the study will be presented.

References