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on Treaty 6, 7 & 8 Territories

E-mail: abfilcansummit@gmail.com
Web : www.filipinosinalberta.ca

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Joe Espina & Vic Lantion

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Joe Espina & Vic Lantion
Researchers

CONTENT

1. CONTEXTUAL
STATISTICS

MENTAL HEALTH

In Canada, families from ethnocultural communities face a number of challenges that exacerbate mental health concerns and therefore affect family relationships. For instance, newcomer families experience stress related to racism and discrimination experienced in the workplace and society; underemployment; lack of accreditation of foreign credentials; patriarchal ideological values; loss of social status at home and in the community (by both women and men); and pre migration experiences (Wells et al., 2013).

There is currently few general research focused on Filipinos and mental health and illness, especially in the Canadian context. Past literature based from the U.S. discusses dimensions of mental health and Filipino communities including: cultural beliefs, spirituality, values, mental health seeking behaviours (Espina, Sato, Este, & Ferrer, 2018). The Strength In Unity project looked to understand the perspectives and experiences of Asian men, including Filipino men on the intersections of mental health, family, and community (Espina, Sato, Este, & Ferrer, 2018).

Domestic Violence

In Canada, visible minority women are reported to have lower five-year rates of spousal violence compared with non-visible minority women (Wells et al. 2013). Also, self-reported rates of spousal violence declined between 1999 and 2004 for visible minority women (Wells et al. 2013). However these low rates may be due to under reported spousal violence due to many reasons (e.g. embarrassment, survey collection methods in English, etc.).

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Domestic violence issues intersect with mental health concerns in families, especially in men. One in five Canadians are affected by mental illness annually (Smetanin et al., 2011). The Strength in Unity (SIU) research project, was a national study based in Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary, and addressed mental health stigma and concerns in men from Asian communities, including Filipino men (Espina, Sato, Este, & Ferrer, 2018).

Migrant Mothers Project, a collaborative group that looks at immigrant rights and how immigration policies contribute to different forms of gender-based violence stated in their policy report that "immigrant women may be more vulnerable to domestic violence due to economic dependence, language barriers, and a lack of knowledge about community resources. Newcomers who arrive in Canada traumatized by war or oppressive governments are much less likely to report physical or sexual violence to the authorities, for fear of further victimization or even deportation" (Bhuyan, Osborne, Zahraei & Tarshis, 2014).

Primacy of gender (gender inequality) as an explanatory model has been challenged since it doesn't capture well the realities of ethno-culturally diverse population. It is important to understand that "race, class, and gender...(are) structures of oppression that somehow are larger than the individuals who produce them" (Mann & Grimes, 2001, p11) and are integral to understanding domestic violence in diverse communities.

In addition, it is also very important to understand the interplay of various risk and protective factors that either promote or prevent one from becoming a victimizer or a victim of domestic violence. According to Godenzi and Du Puy "risk factors are primarily associated with detecting early warning factors that may contribute to domestic violence such as depression, substance abuse, low socioeconomic status, power and domination, and others". On the other hand, "protective factors aim to prevent domestic violence by focusing on interpersonal and quality of life domains by facilitating the learning of healthy relationship skills, personal development, respect and social problems like drug abuse, poverty and employment" (Godenzi & Du Puy 2001).

2 | CONTRIBUTIONS

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

- **Continuation of the abuse:**
  The Learnings for prevention from the Calgary Filipino community research pointed out that "experiences of a home country can significantly inform and change how an individual's migration process can be positive or create vulnerabilities for violence". If abuse is already happening before migration, there is a greater chance for it to continue and scale up after arrival to Canada. "The stress of being a newcomer to Canada, and the barriers that exist with newcomer status can exacerbate conditions that may lead to domestic violence" ((Wells et al. 2013).

- **Low Upward Mobility for Canadian Born Filipino Male Youths due to deprofessionalization of parents:**
  In a study made by Philip Kelly in York University, he found out that "Canadian born Filipino men's rate of university graduation is substantially below that of other racialized groups in the same age cohort (especially Chinese and South Asians)". "Faced with deprofessionalization of their parents, some Filipino male youths may be motivated to aim higher, but may resign themselves to lower positions. The lack of role models in the larger community, especially young boys, is a related problem. Representations and racialization of Filipino identity within wider Canadian society and the non-recognition of that identity in school curricula, also play a role"

- **Underemployment of immigrants and lesser time for mending relationships:**
  Sheila Block and Grace-Edward Galabuzi in 2011 analyzed census data and confirmed that "Canada's labour market is colour-coded. Racialized Canadian men earn only 81 % of what their male peers earn: $48,631 compared to $60,044, respectively (for full-time, full year employment) although racialized people have higher rates of education – including university degrees- than white Canadians do". This resulting financial disparity compels racialized Canadian men to get additional part-time jobs or extra/overtime hours to catch up with monthly expenses. This is very common in Filipino community. Putting in more time on work means lesser time for the needed self- care and mending relationships.

- **Underemployment and use of drugs:**
  As reported by CBC News "racialized men (Filipinos) in Alberta Bow Valley are using shabu – a slang name for crystal meth – to help them work longer hours". Drug abuse is a risk factor for domestic violence.

- **Enduring abusive relationships:**
  The Learnings for prevention from the Calgary Filipino community research also identified that "family is highly revered and is an important traditional institution in Filipino culture, and in part, is why there is silence and stigma. Sometimes religious teachings and beliefs encourage people to stay in relationships – even if they are at times violent. Faith and Family can also be an incredibly supportive source in healing form violent relationships" (Wells et al. 2013).

- **Emotional trauma of Filipino Live-in caregivers leaving their own children to care for others** (Wells et al. 2013).

- **Social isolation and lack of formal supports for Filipino women and men experiences familial concerns.**

- **Perceived differences in family rearing between Canadian and Filipino culture**

- **Intersection of mental health, underemployment, and "culture shock" for newcomer Filipino families.**

3 | POLICIES IMPACTING THE SECTOR

- Immigration programs in Canada such as Live-in Caregiver Programs; many Filipino professional women migrate to Canada through this program putting stress on divided families which are not addressed after family reunification (Wells et al., 2013).

- Almost all funding in the immigrant sector goes to formal settlement and service agencies. Self-help ethnic community societies providing informal and on the ground wrap-around settlement support to their ethno-cultural members barely get the resources and support they need.

RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR POLICIES & PROGRAMS

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When working with Filipino families dealing with domestic violence or mental health concerns, service providers should consider a comprehensive cross-cultural assessment including a history of immigration, socioeconomic beginnings, and regional orientation in the Philippines, the perceptions of the Filipino men (and women) of mental illness and stigma, regardless of immigration status in general (Espina, Sato, Este, & Ferrer, 2018).

- Services should engage in a planning process using intersectional approach that will address the outstanding needs of immigrants in their respective communities" (Lorenzetti et al., 2016)

- Support role-modeling and mentoring particularly to improve educational achievements among Filipino youth. Perhaps funding a Filipino community centre to deliver role-modeling, mentoring and other form of natural supports and settlement services will improve the

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