Review of SYSR-D-18-00184

"Acculturation and mental health among adult forced migrants: A meta-narrative systematic review protocol"

The current protocol aimed at reviewing the current literature on acculturation and mental health among adult asylum seekers and refugees, with a meta-narrative approach. The review will focus on empirical studies measuring acculturation and mental health among adult forced migrants from low- and middle-income countries residing in high income countries.

This review is highly important due to the fact that the numbers of forced migrants are growing worldwide, and we need to know how their mental and their acculturation process is associated in the country of asylum/refugee as well as how these terms are conceptualized. However, some of the issues outlined below limit the contribution of the proposed review in its current form and I hope the authors consider these issues helpful in revising their protocol.

Literature on the relation between acculturation and the mental health status and the adaptation of immigrants/refugees has revealed a plethora of inconsistent findings, mainly due to the operationalization and the conceptualization of acculturation as well as methods, types of samples and measures (e.g., the proxy measures of acculturation) used. For example, Rudmin (2009) found out 126 different taxonomies of acculturation proposed between 1918 and 2003; which reflects the complexity in defining as well as the wide use of acculturation construct. Moreover, Sam and Berry (2016) recently summarized, in the current discourse in acculturation, the terms like "westernization", "biculturalism," multiculturalism," "integration," "re-socialization" and "ethnic identity" that have either been used as an alternative concept or interchangeably with acculturation. Only, some of these terms were suggested in the search strategy of the proposed review and I wondered why some others like integration were not included. Moreover, with regard to acculturation and mental health, one of the major research issues is the role of acculturation on the health of immigrants; that is, whether the acculturation process is detrimental or protective to their health. However, as I went through the search terms, the authors already focused on the negative aspect of mental health with no focus on positive
mental health such as psychological well-being, adjustment. Due to the two above issues, I suggest the authors to focus on just searching acculturation and mental health terms in the empirical articles and then see how these terms are conceptualized and measured (in line with their research questions proposed), rather than just focusing on the concepts the authors limit themselves (or to further elaborate their search terms).

Method should also be elaborated in terms of data synthesis for a general reader (e.g., to clarify the rationale behind the use of meta-narrative approach, the meta-synthesis of quantitative and qualitative research). Even though you specified in the Prisma checklist that, you described on lines 280-312 under "if quantitative synthesis is not appropriate, describe the type of summary planned", to me, it is still not clear how the authors are going to integrate quantitative estimates with qualitative data. This part more focuses on the development of conceptual framework. Hence, narrative synthesis should be better clarified.

I wonder how the authors define low-, middle- and high-income countries.

I also do not understand what the authors mean by mental health 'intentions'.

I would elaborate the research-related search terms by adding such terms like 'empirical', 'data', 'correlation*' to be more comprehensive.

As a minor point, typographical errors should be corrected throughout the text.

And thanks for giving me the opportunity to review this protocol.

References


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