



**Mental Health in Primary Care Settings:
Enhancing Treatment Delivery to Chinese Immigrants**

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26 May 2008 (Monday) 11:30 am - 12.45 pm

HSS Seminar Room 5 (S3.2-B3-05)

Abstract

Over half of all depressed patients in the U.S. visit a primary care physician each year. It is paradoxical, however, that depression interventions are often integrated poorly within routine clinical practice in primary care. Research on Chinese immigrants in the U.S., in particular, shows that this group often prefers seeking initial health care services from primary care physicians. This puts primary care physicians in crucial roles to intervene with Chinese immigrants in need of mental health services. This presentation will examine physicians' clinical practice in managing depression for Chinese immigrants and explore barriers and facilitating factors to optimal care. A two-phased study will be presented. The first phase is a qualitative study utilizing grounded theory approach while the second phase utilizes quantitative survey methodology to further explore phase 1 findings in more depth. Results show that Chinese American physicians report a large disconnect between the mental health system and primary care. Physicians noted several unique cultural needs for their depressed Chinese patients, including the need for Chinese-speaking care managers, and patient literature and education programs to reduce depression stigma. These unique cultural needs along with other barriers and facilitating factors to providing optimal treatment will be discussed. Relevance of findings to the Chinese community in Singapore and future directions will be discussed.

Biography

Dr. Cheng is a licensed clinical psychologist. She received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in substance abuse from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). She currently holds a joint position as an Assistant Professor at the California State University and as a research fellow at UCSF.

As a clinical-cultural psychologist, one of her research and clinical interests is concerned with the role of culture and ethnicity in the delivery of mental health and substance abuse services. She is especially interested in examining innovative approaches to enhance treatment delivery to diverse cultural groups. As such, her current research program examines primary care physicians as potential treatment delivery partners for Chinese American patients struggling with depression and substance use.

Dr. Cheng has extensive experience in working with troubled children and adolescents. In her second line of research, she is interested in the early detection and treatment of children and adolescents at risk for suicide.