

# IWCH ABSTRACTS

## ANALYSING PATIENT-PHYSICIAN COMMUNICATION ON LIFESTYLE MEDICINE TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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**Background:** Mental illness affects 1.2 million youth in Canada. In particular, female adolescents have shown to suffer significant consequences associated with mental illness. While family physicians are often the first line of contact for health-related concerns, little is known about how promotion of lifestyle medicine enhances the mental wellbeing of female adolescents.

**Method:** Using a qualitative content analysis approach, a survey about counselling on lifestyle medicine was completed by 126 Hamilton family physicians, with a response rate of 25.2%. The data was thematically analysed to explore emergent themes.

**Results:** The three themes that yielded the highest agreement amongst key informants are lifestyle medicine factors, barriers and improvements in communication to female adolescent patients. Within each theme, sub-themes were subsequently identified. Specifically, the first theme highlighted a range of lifestyle medicine factors, including familial support, physical activity, nutrition, sleep, journaling, and mindfulness, all of which influence mental health. Theme 2 considered barriers in communication, which uncovered two subthemes: trust and time constraints. Finally, theme 3 investigated potential improvements in the quality of conversation, giving rise to the four sub-themes of clinical empathy: listening skills, time, and social media.

**Conclusion:** In this study, physicians were aware of female-specific mental health concerns, by which they were able to recognize important ways to promote inclusive communication on lifestyle medicine. Analysing the data in regards to the patient-centred care model, the prevalence of screening tools — PHQ-9 and GAD-7— and the use of communication frameworks —HEADSS and SSHADESS— were deemed supportive to patient counselling. Communication is an important factor over which physicians have the opportunity to promote the mental health consequences of female adolescent patients.

## THE GLOBAL MIDWIFERY PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAM

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Pen-pal programs have been utilized in physician and nurse education programs, contributing to improved ability to self-reflect and greater cultural competence for students. Cultural competence is becoming a requirement of caring professions, especially in the context of global health; high cultural competence is associated with a more positive view on diversity and more open behaviour. Thus, it is imperative to nurture cultural competence in the education of future health care professionals. However, the application of pen-pal programs for midwifery students has previously not been reported. The purpose of the Global Peer-to-Peer Program is to connect midwifery students in Australia and Canada to foster conversations that expand sociocultural knowledge and aid overall learning. The effectiveness of the collaborative activity will be measured by comparing the results of two surveys: one completed prior to the intervention, and one completed after. These surveys use Likert scales to assess participants' baseline knowledge, exposure to global health topics, and international midwifery practice. Additionally, the participating students may partake in individual interviews at the completion of the study to discuss their experience in a different forum. It is hypothesized that the pen-pal program is a feasible educational intervention that will improve student midwives' knowledge and understanding of global health topics and international midwifery practice, including roles and scope of practice.



## **BLACK WOMENS' HEALTH MATTERS: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF RACIAL STEREOTYPICAL NARRATIVES ON BLACK WOMEN**

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Black women are disproportionately affected by negative stereotypical narratives and complex representations of their community. The “strong, Black woman” stereotype, and many others which are contextually similar, possess diverse meanings dependent on social context and lived experiences. Studies exploring the implications of normative and stereotypical narratives of Black women on their health have revealed differences in psychological and somatic health outcomes, due to Black women’s past experiences and perception of the stereotypes.

This literature review explores a range of popular connotations and denotations meanings attributed to similar racial stereotypes. Brittany Davy, Afro-Caribbean Black doctoral student researcher in Ontario, examined published research in North America to highlight patterns in the positive and negative mental health experiences of Black women who have been exposed to common racial and gender-focused stereotypical narratives. Studies included in this review discussed the experiences of women from various age groups, from first-year college students to women approaching old age (approximately 60 years old). All studies included women that identify as Black members of African descendent populations, such as African American and Afro-Caribbean.

Researchers that have previously interviewed Black women within North America found that there were several theses associated with stereotypical narratives specifically applied to Black women, including: strong/assertive, independent, educated, hardworking/ambitious, caring, and self-confident. Several Black women expressed their beliefs that internalizing and perpetuating strong, Black-women traits has been a source of empowerment, which promotes self-sufficient and resilient behaviour in this marginalized population. Contrastingly, to this population’s detriment, these narratives can be particularly debilitating and oppressive as Black women may feel objected to altering their behaviour in order to fit within the boundaries ascribed by these stereotypes. Other Black women have displayed depressive symptoms that have been correlated with their exposure to these stereotypes, thus depicting the harmful effects of social ideologies on their physical and psychological health. Predominant stereotypes and lifestyle behaviours contribute to experiences of threatened mental health, as society constantly reproduces unattainable ideals.

Further exploration will be conducted by the researcher throughout her academic journey; her dissertation is expected to reveal differentiated yet interrelated results between the endorsement of Black women-centered narratives and health experiences. This research is crucial, as much of the current published literature is conducted within the United States of America; the deep-rooted history of slavery, culture, and covert racist treatment of Black people today may hinder the generalizability of the findings to a Canadian context. Literature regarding the impact of stereotypical narratives on Black women within the Canadian context is misrepresented within published research.