



Abstract

- When it comes to Filipino culture, there is a lack of knowledge regarding mental health. There are many factors that contribute to mental health in the Philippines such as stigma, family norms, and culture.
- I looked at the Philippine's medical history to see how they have reacted and see what they have done to combat mental health issues.
- One other factor I looked at that contributes to mental health in the Philippines, is the effect of natural disasters. Natural disasters not only affect families after the incident, but leave a long lasting mental note for future incidents to come.

Background

- The Philippines was not very proactive when it came to mental health awareness. They were also not even reactive when it came to mental health issues. Most of the focus was on responding to physical conditions.
- Around 2010, The Aquino Health Agenda was developed. It was designed to be like a health care reform. This was mainly established to help the poor communities in the Philippines receive health benefits.
- In 2016, The Philippine Health Agenda was established. This health agenda was for between 2016- 2022. The Universal Health Coverage Bill 5784 of September 2017 was made to help try and enroll all Filipinos into National Health Security Program so that they could receive and be entitled to benefits.
- There was no type of mental health awareness program until June of 2018 when The Mental Health Act was implemented.
- Before all these acts and agendas being developed, there was not much if any types of programs that supported mental health. Even now, these medical programs and aids are not really focused towards mental health. Most of these medical programs are towards general care and thus shows we need more emphasis on mental health treatment and aid.

Culture, Stigma, & Family Norms

- Stigma is a big factor that helps lead to barriers and discrimination that prevents those with mental health illnesses from seeking support.
- In Filipino culture, mental health issues were looked at sometimes as madness. This label of "madness" made others afraid to associate with those labeled. This label had a bad connotation meaning that you could not take care of yourself.
- "The Filipino finds his identity in his family rather than as an individual. Acknowledgement of hostile feelings is culturally unacceptable. These feelings are suppressed, but this defense leads to mislabeling of hostility feelings, and difficulty in maintaining controlled levels of hostility" (Shakman 280).
- Another cultural belief that affects mental health illness is those who suffer from mental health issues are considered cursed with an evil spirit, bad magic, or have a loss of soul.
- Most times, people in the Philippines go to traditional indigenous healers. If they do go to hospitals, the hospitals are not equipped enough with the knowledge or the resources to help treat those mental health issues.

Conclusion/ Future Research

There has been some progression in regard to building stronger communities and stronger connections. But, overall there is still much more work and research that needs to be done with regard to providing mental health awareness and help. There needs to be more mental health programs in the Philippines in order to help those who experience mental health issues from various aspects. Programs and those in charge in the Philippines also need to be more proactive when it comes to mental health programs that way if a natural disaster hits, they are already much more prepared than before. The Philippines should also reach out to others to see how to deal with mental health issues. It has not been till recent that mental health awareness has become more popular. It took celebrities, famous athletes, and many people to come out and express their concern for mental health in order for there to be more mental health awareness.

Natural Disasters

The Philippines are known for having a history with natural disasters occurring often. Known for having earthquakes, typhoons, floods, and volcanic eruptions. The Philippines is one of the countries with a higher risk of disasters. "In the Philippines, after super typhoon Haiyan affected the Visayas Region, approximately 800,000 people suffered from mental health problems. Of this number, about 10% or 80,000 people were dealing with severe depression" (Yolanda). Children are much more susceptible to mental health issues after a natural disaster because they are worried about their parents and what is going to happen to their family. Natural disasters not affect someone mentally by having to always worry about such incidents, but it can affect someone physically, socially and economically. Some solutions that have been done recently are to link communities together and build strong connections with each other that way if something like this happens again, people can be more prepared as well as have others to seek help and support from.

