Korean(GTA) Community Mental Health Needs Assessment

Hong Fook Mental Health Association
October 5, 2021

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To understand the sociodemographic characteristics of mental health status among Korean community in the GTA

2. To clarify the individual, familial, cultural, and social structural factors that affect mental health needs in the Korean community

3. To identify barriers to receiving mental health services and providing recommendations to improve the mental health services to serve the Korean community in the GTA

BACKGROUND

- Dec. 2018 : The Korean Advisory Committee of the HFMHA established a subcommittee,

  the Korean Community Needs Assessment Planning Committee (KNAPC)

- Apr. 2019 : HFMHA approved the community-driven research application by the KNAPC

- Apr. - Dec. 2019 : Literature review and data collection

- Jan. - Jun. 2020 : Data analysis and writing report

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RESEARCH METHODS

Quantitative Research

- Survey (485 participants)

  1) Gender : Female 67.8%, Male 31.5%

  2) Age : 24-64 years 77.6%

  3) Education : College or more 76.3%

  4) Immigration status : Citizen 64.7%., Permanent Resident 21.2%

  5) Length of residence : 11 years or more 66.6%

  6) Language : Korean 60.4%, Korean + English 33.8%

RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative Research

- Focus group (52 participants)

   1) HF client group

   2) Youth group

   3) Senior group

   4) Volunteer group

   5) Service provider group

- Key informants' interview: ethnic Korean politician, psychiatrist, ED of Korean social service, pastor

FINDINGS

Overall Trend

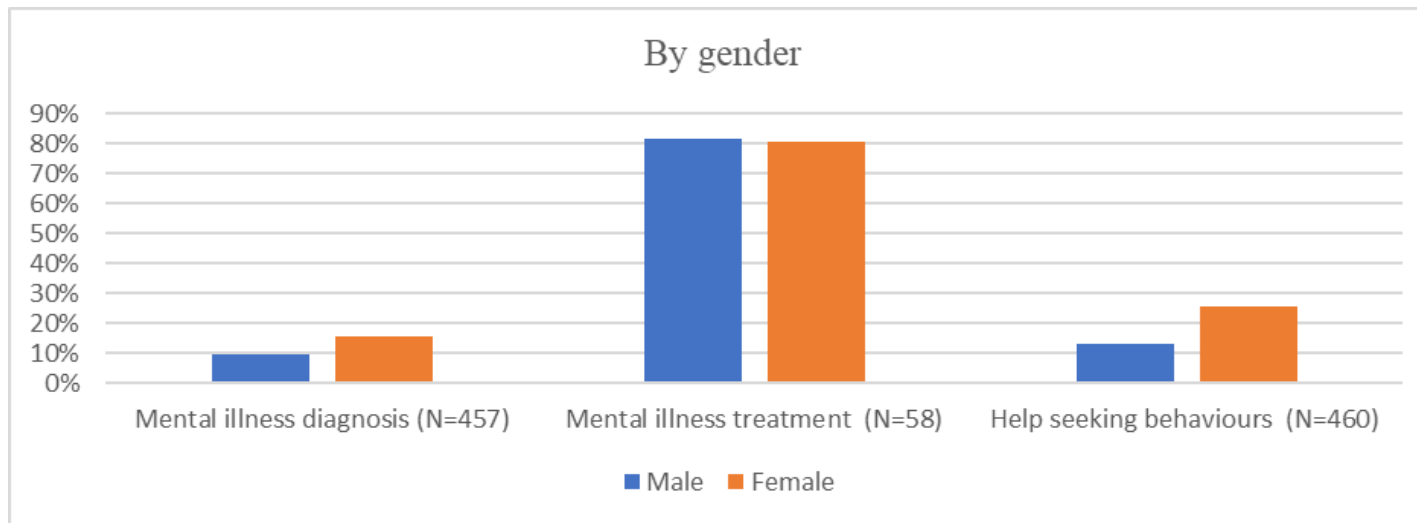- Diversity in mental health needs across age and gender

Figure 1. Mental illness diagnosis, treatment, and help-seeking behaviors by gender and by age group.

Overall Trend _ continued

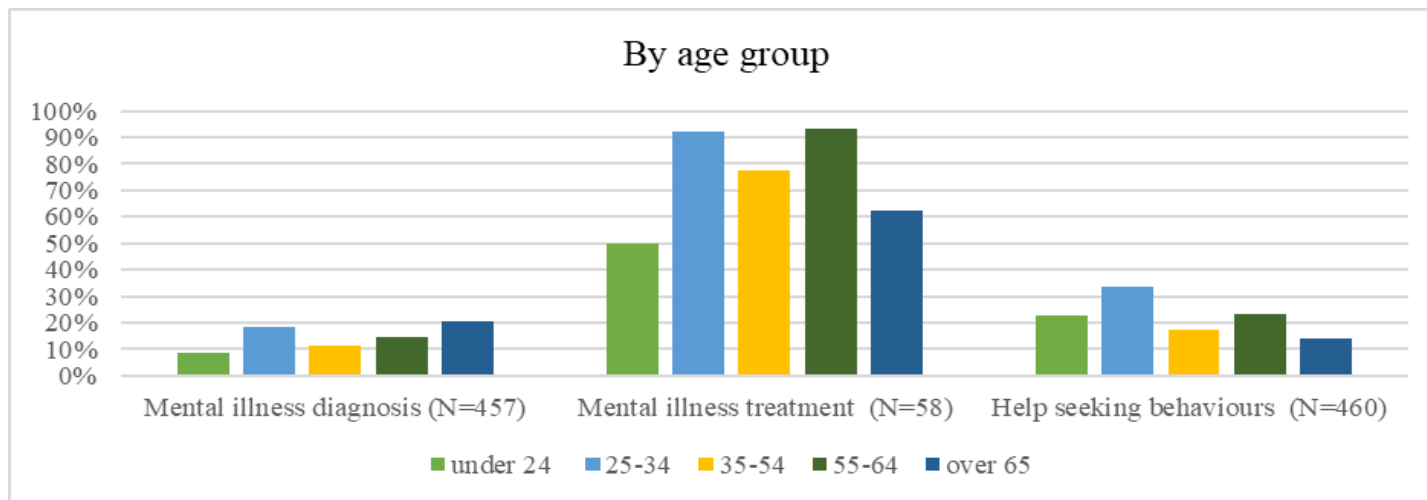- Diversity in mental health needs across age and gender

Figure 1. Mental illness diagnosis, treatment, and help-seeking behaviors by gender and by age group.

FINDINGS _ CONTINUED

Comparison to Other Studies/Surveys

- Similar results were also identified by two studies focusing on Korean immigrants in the US (Jang et al., 2011; Sin et al., 2010).

- Participants reported a slightly higher percentage of mental illness than the general population the general Canadian population.

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FINDINGS _ CONTINUED

Significant Factors

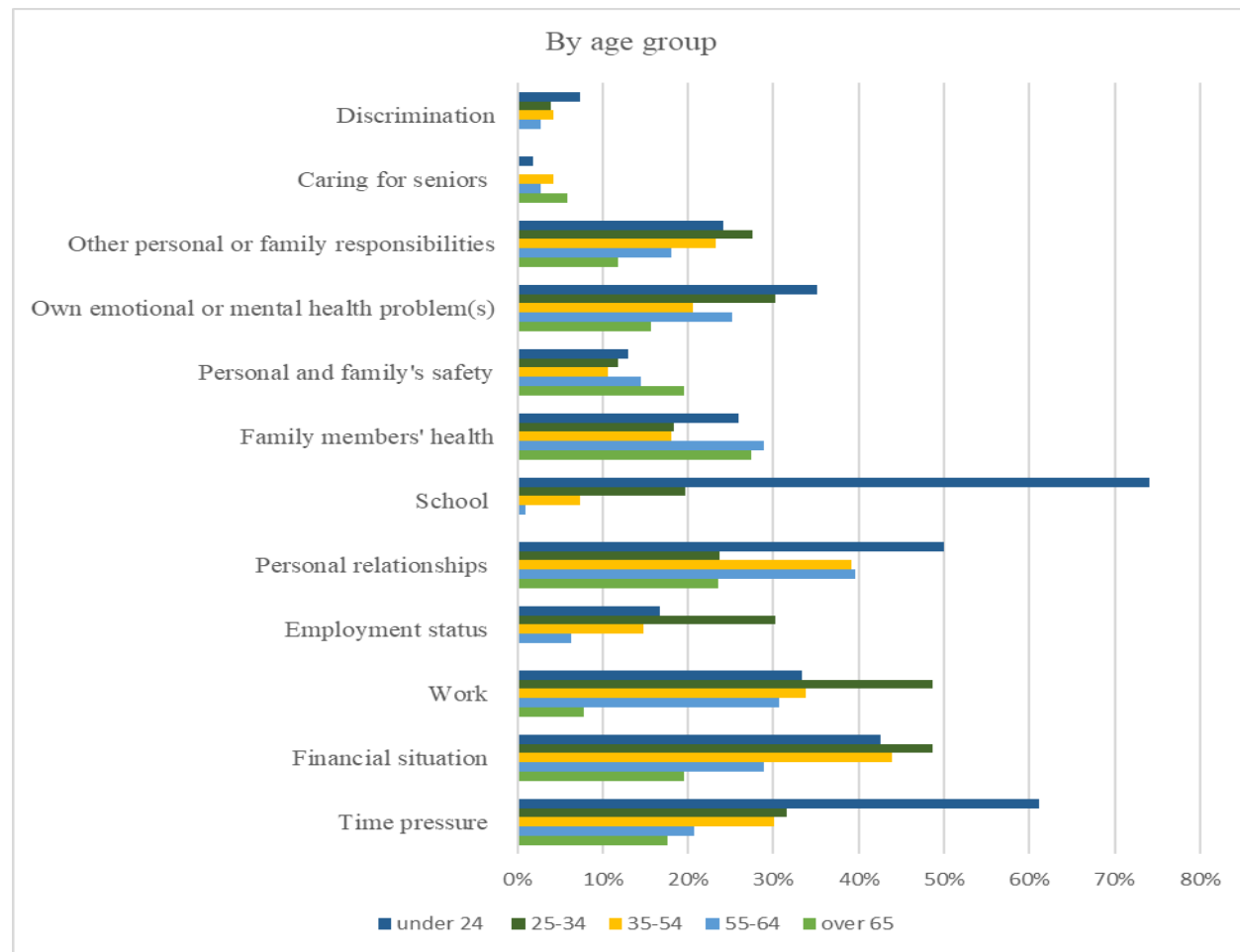- Different Life Stages and Tasks

Figure 7. Sources of stress by gender and age group (n=481)

FINDINGS _ CONTINUED

Significant Factors _ continued

- Major issues in youth population

  1) Experiences of discrimination and racism in the education system

  2) Issues related to addictions including substance uses and addiction to internet

- Family situations and caregiving burden

  - Responsibilities for the family members with mental illness in the same household

FINDINGS _ CONTINUED

Social Stigma Associated with Mental Illness

- Familism and family honor

  - Mental illness viewed as associated with a weak personality and sin

  - Strongness of the family more emphasized when facing difficulties in settling in a new country

- Religious beliefs and mental illness

  - Attitudes to overcome mental illness by practicing religious activities, such as prayer

  - Reluctance to talk because some believe that mental illness is related to demonization in Christian faith

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Barriers to Access to Services

- Social stigma

  - Familism, family honor, and emphasis on strongness as immigrants

- Language barrier

  - Difficulties in expressing the emotional difficulties and mental health challenges

- Systemic issues

  - Psychotherapy service fees not covered by OHIP

  - Lack of mental health awareness of some family practice physicians

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promotion for mental health awareness

- Re-evaluation and extension of health service provision

- Encouraging religious community's active involvement

- Promoting systemic changes

Thank you so much!