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Acculturation

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Acculturation

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Abstract

The phenomenon of acculturation occurs when groups of people from different cultures come into constant contact with shifts in the original culture, the host country's culture, or the cultures of both groups. It can affect immigrants' health and well-being as a result of coping with stressful experiences such as prejudice, racism, and poverty, as well as changes in or loss of identity, a lack of social support, exposure to diverse views, cultural values and norms, and particular patterns of health behaviors (drinking, smoking, taking illicit drugs).

Key Points

Globalization has led to extraordinary levels of migration. Worldwide, there are 200 million immigrants and refugees.

The degree to which each family member acculturates varies. Children are more likely to acculturate faster than their parents.

Immigrants are frequently depressed. Anxiety, post-traumatic symptoms, alcohol and/or substance use/abuse/dependence, pessimism, and stress-related medical conditions such as hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and diabetes are linked to their depression. The stress and loss from the process of immigration often leads to parents who report feelings of depression.

Acculturation Model		
	Identification with Heritage culture: HIGH	Identification with Heritage culture: LOW
Identification with US culture: HIGH	Integration (Bicultural)	Assimilation
Identification with US culture: LOW	Separation	Marginalization

Conclusion and Discussion

The immigrant journey today follows complex paths with contrasting experiences and differing outcomes. Research on the emotional and mental health of people using the different strategies of acculturation have varying results. Immigrants' efforts to assimilation have been linked to stress-related health issues. People who use the marginalization acculturation approach are more depressed, anxious, and have poorer mental health compared to the other three. Those who use the integration (biculturalism) method are the most healthy psychologically (and more successful) than the other three groups.

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