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Global Health Topic: Mental Health; Region: Southeast Asia

Tonsing KN. A review of mental health literacy in Singapore. *Soc Work Health Care*. 2018;57(1):27-47. doi:10.1080/00981389.2017.1383335

Tonsing incorporates studies that can potentially explain mental health literacy in Southeast Asian countries. It revealed Singaporeans’ negative attitudes toward mental illness and believed those with mental health problems were dangerous. Therefore, they concluded Singapore’s low mental health literacy and an urgent need to increase awareness of mental health within the general population and healthcare workers.

Information from this source could be useful in writing a paper of the need for mental health awareness in Southeast Asian countries. Given the fact that the author evaluates many different types of studies her conclusions seem reliable and valid. While holding a mainly objective viewpoint, the literature examines underlying causes for the low level of mental health literacy in countries such as Singapore.

This source is helpful because it addresses many different contributing aspects for low mental health literacy. Revealing all these aspects is a great starting point for research and narrowing down what is the specific topic of interest. These potential causes can be researched more and thereby enact interventions that could occur at the community or policy level.

Brooks H, Syarif AK, Pedley R, et al. Improving mental health literacy among young people aged 11-15 years in Java, Indonesia: the co-development of a culturally-appropriate, user-centred resource (The IMPeTUs Intervention). Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health. 2021;15(1):56. Published 2021 Oct 7. doi:10.1186/s13034-021-00410-5

Brooks’ research addresses ways to improve mental health literacy among the young in Indonesia. The main argument of this paper is that mental health problems that emerge over a lifetime especially during childhood can impact the global burden of disease. Their purpose is to offer a strategy for early intervention focused on self -management and improving health literacy.

Information from this source provides more compelling evidence of low mental health literacy in Southeast Asia that can impact the population. As it compares to other sources, it gives more in-depth information about their processes and methods. The information seems reliable and objective as its goal is to help improve mental health literacy among the young.

This source is helpful in that it provides one type of intervention to combat low mental health literacy among the youth in this region. The source is helpful in showing what type of intervention can be used and the results that come from it.

Niaz U, Hassan S. Culture and mental health of women in South-East Asia. World Psychiatry. 2006;5(2):118-120.

Niaz gives an overview of how cultural factors in South East Asia play a large role in the mental health of women in these regions. Women’s health in this region has been neglected due to how cultures here are predominantly patriarchal. This increases the global burden of disease in mental health in South East Asia significantly.

This source is useful in a sense. It gives more insight into rising levels of mental health illnesses seen in South East Asia, particularly in women. While the goal of the source is to acknowledge cultural factors that play a role in mental health a lot of the background does not seem to have references. It is not until later in the paper, where studies are acknowledged and their results.

It is a helpful resource, because it gives more background knowledge on the high burden of mental health in South East Asia. While it particularly focuses on one group only, it still provides an interesting perspective and insight that can later be expanded upon in further research.

Munawar K, Mukhtar F, Choudhry FR, Ng ALO. Mental health literacy: A systematic review of knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders in Malaysia. Asia Pac Psychiatry. 2022;14(1). doi:10.1111/appy.12475

Munawar focuses on rising levels of mental health problems seen in Malaysia as a consequence of lack of mental health literacy. Utilizing cross sectional studies, they found that many participants stigmatized those with mental health problems and would rather refer to spiritual healers for treatment.

As the source compares to other sources, it is a very strong and objective literature. Utilizing many different types of studies such as cross sectional and analytical they are able to provide strong evidence for their views. With multiple cited resources and observations, they convey their argument clearly for the rising levels of mental health problems and possible reasonings behind it.

This source is helpful because it reveals that there has not been an excessive number of studies done on this topic in the South East Asia region. However, by combining many different studies it is clear that there is an urgent need to increase mental health literacy and destigmatize it in this region. It has changed my view on different interventions that need to be done.

Dang HM, Lam TT, Dao A, Weiss B. Mental health literacy at the public health level in low and middle income countries: An exploratory mixed methods study in Vietnam. PLoS One. 2020;15(12):e0244573. Published 2020 Dec 31. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0244573

Dang reviews how mental health literacy can be impacted at both the individual level and community level. Addressing mental health at these two levels can have both an advantage and disadvantage. The main barriers for low mental health literacy are due to misinformation at the public level and uninterest at the policy level. These results can help guide mental health literacy development in Southeast Asia countries.

Compared to other sources, this is also a very good and thorough paper. The mixed methods study allows for it to present the data in an objective way. It seems to be reliable and even mentions that their sample size is small and may not be able to be applied to larger scale populations.

This source is helpful since it looks at different levels that play into health. It is important for my research, since health literacy is a result of individual and public health policies showcasing how upstream, midstream, and downstream elements contribute to health.