

Title: Unveiling Patient-Related Barriers to Mental Health Treatment for Low-Income, Midlife Black and Latina Women in North Philadelphia

Background: Despite the growing recognition of disparities in mental health care across race, gender, and socioeconomic status, there remains a significant gap in research focusing on barriers to accessing treatment in midlife (ages 35-60) minority women¹. This study aims to identify the perceptions and attitudes towards utilization of mental health services in low-income, midlife Black and Latina women of North Philadelphia.

Methods: 50 midlife Black and Latina women from North Philadelphia were recruited to participate in semi-structured interviews to discuss their perceptions and experiences that both inhibited and supported accessing mental health treatment. Interviews were transcribed and coded to uncover prevalent attitudinal themes.

Results: Participants had an average age of 50, with 74% being Black, 20% Latina, and 6% non-Hispanic White or other ethnicities. During interviews, the majority of Black (69%) and Latina (82%) women mentioned past mental health challenges. Important patient-related barriers were identified; including stigma, the belief that treatment was unhelpful, and prior negative experiences with mental health services.

Conclusion: Addressing the potential patient-related barriers that limit access to mental health care services in Black and Latina women can help tailor interventions that may increase utilization of these services in the future². These findings may not be generalizable, as Asian, Native American, and Bi/Multiracial women were not included in our study. Community based programs that aim to reduce stigma and increase visibility can benefit midlife women in North Philadelphia³.

References

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3. Conner KO, Kosyluk K, Tran JT, Anderson E, Davis-Cotton D, Hill AM. The Impact of a Culturally Meaningful Storytelling Intervention on Stigma and Attitudes About Mental Health Treatment. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. 2023;211(6):419. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000001640>