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PREVALENCE OF PSYCHOTIC SYMPTOMS: COMPARATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND NATIVE- BORN PRIMARY CARE SERVICE USERS

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Introduction: Epidemiological studies reveal higher rates of psychotic disorders among immigrants of ethnic minorities. However, the variation in prevalence of psychosis differs, and the proposed explanations and risk factors vary across the literature.

Objectives:

- 1) to examine the prevalence of psychotic symptoms in a sample of immigrants and native-born in a primary care setting context
- 2) to explore the effect that certain socio-demographic characteristics have in the difference in prevalence.

Aims: It is expected that the presence of psychotic symptoms will be greater for the immigrant population than for the native-born population. Low educational level, a low socio-economic status and the presence of a physical illness will partly explain these differences.

Methods: 3000 patients (1500 immigrants and 1500 native-born outpatients paired in age and gender) were interviewed in a primary care setting. They completed the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview, including the psychotic disorders sections, and a questionnaire that probed demographic characteristics and physical health status.

Results: Immigrants showed significantly higher rates of psychotic symptoms than native-born patients in both sections of diagnosis: life-span psychotic symptoms only (9.8% in immigrants and 5.3% in native-born) and life span with current psychotic symptoms (7% of the immigrants and 4.8% of the native-born). Immigrants also showed a lower education level, and a lower socio-economic status. When controlling for these factors, a relationship between these factors and the symptoms was found.

Conclusions: Findings are discussed in the context of culture and etiology of psychotic symptoms, and suggestions with regard to future research are made.