Chronic stress, a cardiovascular risk factor, linked to societal integration in teenage immigrants of African descent

Cheryl Zlotnick RN DrPH
Hadass Goldblatt MSW PhD
Daphna Birenbaum-Carmeli PhD
Efrat Shadmi RN PhD
Omer Taychaw MA
Required Information

First Author - Cheryl Zlotnick RN DrPH

Learning Objectives-

• Describe the nature of cardiovascular risk factors among youth.
• Identify at least two cultural acquisition models that are not possible for youth of color.
• Distinguish between the cardiovascular risk factors that are unique to youth immigrants from a low income country to an industrialized society in a high income country.

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Framework: Healthy Environments Partnership

Fundamental Race-based
• Residential segregation
• SES inequalities

Intermediate
• Social Context
• Physical Environment

Proximate
• Stressors
• Health Behaviors
• Societal Integration & Social Support
• Psychosocial Factors

CV Health
• Cardiovascular Risk & Protective Markers (e.g., obesity, HTN)

Social and Physical Environments and Disparities in Risk for Cardiovascular Disease: The Healthy Environments Partnership Conceptual Model

Amy J. Schulz,1 Srimathi Kannan,2 J. Timothy Dvonch,2 Barbara A. Israel,1 Alex Allen III,3 Sherman A. James,4 James S. House,5 and James Lepkowski6

1Health Behavior and Health Education, and 2Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA; 3ISLES, Inc, Trenton, New Jersey USA; 4Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA; 5Survey Research Center and Department of Sociology, and 6Institute for Social Research and Department of Biostatistics, University of Michigan, Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

Chronic stress is the accumulation of a persistent and continuous exposure to a source of stress…

Proximate Component

Proximate

- Stressors
- Health Behaviors
- Societal Integration and Social Support
- Psychosocial Factors


Chronic Stressors

What are the chronic stressors for immigrants, particularly those with distinctive physical characteristics, from developing countries?
Study Objectives

• This study triangulates three sources of qualitative data to explore the health behaviors, social support, stressors and psychosocial factors influencing cardiovascular health among adolescent immigrants of African descent.
The Population

Operation Moses began on November 18, 1984, and ended six weeks later on January 5, 1985. In that time, just over 7,000 Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel.

Operation Solomon began in May 24, 1991 and continuing non-stop for 36 hours. A total of 14,324 Ethiopian Jews resettled in Israel.
Methods

Sample
A purposive sample of individuals who self-identify as being from the Israeli-Ethiopian community-
   community leaders (n=4), youth (n=10), and a community advisory group comprised of mothers (n=6).

Instrument
In-depth semi-structured, audiotaped interviews with content areas: diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol, stressors
Results

(1) Between Ethiopian and Israeli Lifestyle
Youth participants indicated knowledge of good health habits including a diet with vegetables, fruits, low amounts of fried food, and regular exercise.

“...in Ethiopia, the lifestyle was active in that there was physical work, agricultural work... [and] there were no processed foods. The food there was natural. They [Ethiopian] ate the food that they grew themselves.”

(Leader: File 1, p2-3, 25-27, 1-5)

“Ethiopian youth are influenced by everything...cigarettes, alcohol, all that, [although the other Israeli youth] are more addicted to it.”

(Youth, M: File 5, p.16, 5-8)
(2) Being like other Israeli youth

“It's important for me to invest in things related to life, the environment and society where I live. I always try to give, if I can... I have no [educational support or] background from home. So I've gathered information from school and from [other] people]...I've figured out how to act... [and how] to become integrated in Israeli society. I want to contribute to my society... I immigrated at age 11. ..”

(Youth, M: File 10, p.3, 3-9)

“When I was in high school, I was hooked on the computer, TV, all, all these things...I would be on the computer four, five hours.”

(Youth, M: File 8, p.20, 12-14)
“With Ethiopians, it’s known there's racism ... Not everyone, I don't say that it's everyone, but there are lots of cases, there's no shortage of cases.”

(Youth, F: File 3, p. 22, 16-19)

“Today I am more Israeli than Ethiopian. I am busy with what I have here, not with the past. I try to move forward, even though there is racism, and there is discrimination. Still, I am moving [towards integrating] into the Israeli society rather than Ethiopian society. ...I do not give up. I came here for one reason, one goal: to become part of this nation.”

(Youth, M: File 5, p2-3, 21-27,1)

“[Some are adapting to the Israeli culture, but] on the other hand, [they have lost many of our customs and do not even] eat Injera.”

(Leader, F: File 4, p. 37, 20-26)
Results

(3) Living and Integrating in an Alienating Society

“I feel, alone...isolated. I think that Israelis and Ethiopians should be better integrated...I connect more to Ethiopians”

(Youth, M: File 6, p.10, 23-27)

 “[An Ethiopian-Israeli youth] tries to integrate into society and sometimes gets rejected. Every time he makes headway, always there is the stage that he gets grabbed and slapped, and grabbed and slapped, and then again has to return home”

(Youth, M: File 104, p. 14: 18-20)

“No, really, the [skin] color is the only thing that will remain [of our culture]. I say that I'm Ethiopian. Okay. But can I cook the food? Do I dress traditionally? [The language] I have at the tip of my tongue is Hebrew.”

(Leader, F: File 4, p. 45, 10-13)
Discussion

Chronic Stress

Proximate

• Stressors
• Health Behaviors
• Societal Integration and Social Support
• Psychosocial Factors

Cultural Acquisition Strategies
Marginalization
Acculturation
Assimilation*
Alternation*
Multicultural*
Fusion*

Youth of Immigrant Families

* Less likely for immigrants with physical features that differ from individuals of host society.
Thousands block highway in Tel Aviv at anti-racism protest

By Adiv Sterman and Marissa Neman

“We are Israelis just like everyone else...”
Thanks!

Cheryl Zlotnick RN DrPH
Associate Professor
University of Haifa
Mt Carmel, Haifa, Israel
czlotnick@univ.haifa.ac.il