

# Indigenous Peoples' Mental Health in Canada

Cathleen Rock\*

Department of Psychology, University of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

## Introduction

There is widespread consensus among academics that mental illness affects Indigenous peoples at a higher rate than other groups. According to research, colonialism and the processes that go along with it have a significant impact on the health of Indigenous people all over the world. Mental health has received relatively little attention in Canadian health research, despite the prevalence of disparities in Indigenous people's morbidity and mortality rates. The literature on Indigenous mental health in Canada is critically examined in this paper [1]. Between the years 2006 and 2016, we looked for research on mental health, Indigenous peoples, and Canada in eleven databases and two Indigenous health-focused journals. The review includes over 200 papers that are categorized according to research theme, population group, and geography. The findings indicate that the majority of the published literature is concerned with issues related to colonialism in mental health services as well as the prevalence and causes of mental illness among Indigenous Canadians. However, there are several significant gaps in the literature. In Canada, research on Indigenous mental health places too much emphasis on suicide and problematic substance use; It is recommended to employ colonialism and historical trauma more critically; Métis and urban or off-reserve Indigenous people are two populations that are underrepresented in research. As a starting point for discussions, dialogue, and additional research regarding mental health research for Indigenous peoples worldwide, the findings are useful in an international context [2].

## Description

According to World Health Organization data from 2007, there are approximately 370 million Indigenous people living in the world today. According to Wilson and Richmond (2009) and the World Health Organization (2007), the term "Indigenous peoples" typically refers to groups of people whose ancestral lands predate colonial incursions and nation-state boundaries. A common experience of colonialism is what unites Indigenous people all over the world, but how this experience and history are experienced and documented varies greatly among Indigenous groups and geographies. All over the world, indigenous people are referred to by a variety of names. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are collectively referred to as "Aboriginal peoples" in Canada's constitutional definition of Indigenous peoples. Native Americans are referred to as American Indians or Alaska Natives in the United States [3]. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the terms used in Australia; Additionally, Indigenous people in New Zealand use the name Mori. Many of these terms don't take into account the names that Indigenous peoples give themselves, and they don't show how different Indigenous groups are within nation-states. According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the term "First Nations peoples" encompasses over 600 distinct First Nations

in Canada. In Canada, First Nations people are frequently divided into the following categories based on where they live: on or off the reservation. Early settlement resulted in the creation of a system of reserves, which are small parcels of land reserved for Indigenous people. Since 1876, the Canadian Indian Act has been in effect [4].

Indigenous populations all over the world have a significantly higher rate of mental and physical illness than the general population. According to the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2008), health outcomes like infant mortality, high rates of acute or chronic pain, and high rates of injury have been linked to social inequalities associated with determinants of health like poverty and colonial racism. 2009, King et al., 2012, Gracey and King, 2009). In terms of mental health in particular, research from all over the world strongly suggests that we shouldn't jump to conclusions about the prevalence of mental illness without taking into account colonial structures and processes. Not only has colonialism been linked to mental illness among Indigenous people, but also to experiences in residential schools and suicidal ideation or attempts, but also as a framework that can construct mental illness according to its own norms and definitions. Historically, settlers have used colonial and non-Indigenous concepts and epistemologies in their research into the mental health of Indigenous populations, both in Canada and elsewhere [5]. According to a lot of research, contemporary mental health research in Canada continues to ignore Indigenous perspectives, which has the potential to misrepresent Indigenous communities' rates and types of mental health issues. In addition, Canadian academics warn that colonialism is deeply ingrained in the health care system, a problem that prevents Indigenous people from gaining access to health care, particularly for mental health issues [6].

## Conclusion

The majority of this paper's mental health research on Canadian Indigenous peoples focuses on colonialism and the effects of colonization on the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples and communities. It emphasizes how important colonial practices and policies have been and are still in Indigenous mental health. A lot of the solutions discussed in this review are based on the idea of "culture," which may help promote multiculturalism.

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## Conflict of interest

None.

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\*Address for Correspondence: Cathleen Rock, Department of Psychology, University of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland, E-mail: rock@cathleen.ir

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