

Introduction

Asian Indians are the second largest international student group in the U.S. but much less research exists on their well-being and help-seeking behaviors compared to their Chinese counterparts (Chennamsetti, 2020).

Research Questions

- 1) How do Asian Indian international graduate students describe their stressors?
- 2) How do Asian Indian international graduate students take care of their mental well-being?
- 3) How do Asian Indian international graduate students view mental health and seeking professional help?

Methodology

- Constructivist worldview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 195)
- Qualitative design
- 10 participants (6 males, 4 females)
- 60-minute Zoom interview
- Transcribe, create themes, and present findings through "narrative passage" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 195)

Literature Review

Asian Indian International Graduate Student's Mental Health

A study done on international student's mental health during COVID-19 pandemic showed many international students reported increased anxiety, fear, loneliness, not belonging, and frustration (Maleku et al., 2021). There are many research studies on the mental health or psychological well-being of Chinese students and very limited research on the mental health of Asian Indian International students. For example, a systematic review on East Asian International students' psychological well-being shows that majority of researchers tend to choose Chinese international students as a representative to East or general Asian international students (Li et al., 2014; Zheng & West-Olatunji, 2016).

Help-Seeking Behavior

International students do not use counseling service is due to the lack of knowledge or awareness towards their mental health needs. International students often seek physical help instead for tiredness and lack of sleep (Aubrey, 1991; Mori, 2000 as cited in Hyun et al., 2007). In addition, the study also expressed the reason counseling services were underutilized were due to the "stigma of seeking help, lack of knowledge, and lack of culturally appropriate services" (Hwang, et al., 2014, p. 350).

Results

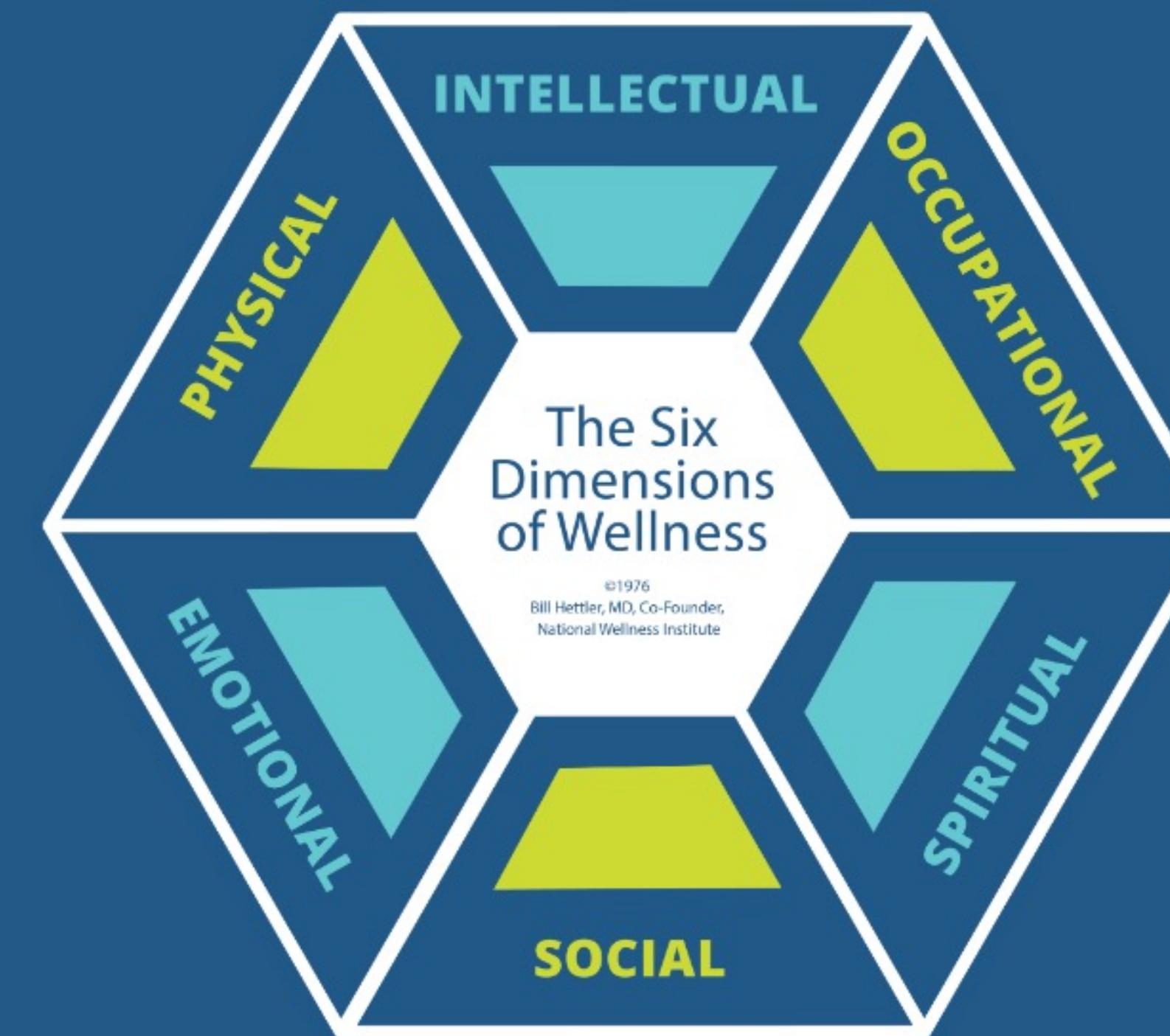
Land of Opportunities

- "I think my journey was really to get a better education

Views on Mental Health

- "I always believe the mind is not a problem but the mindset."- Kabala
- "In my culture and family in India, mental health was not talked about at all, but I did struggle. I struggled with mental health quite a bit in school," – Monica

Six Dimensions of Wellness (Hettler, 1976)



Results cont.

Academic

"I love what I'm studying and I love the faculty. I used the TAs because, culturally back in India, I am not used to approaching our professors easily" – Rishi

Social

"I tend to enjoy the quietness. I'm from Delhi, which is a really crowded place. I enjoy this a lot more. I won't say that I have a lot of friends. I'm selectively social. So I have very, very close two to three friends that I feel closest" – Aisha

Spiritual

Religious, having the same energy as others, meditation

Physical

Eat healthier, Physical Activity, Meditation

Professional

"I have an old boss who's hoping to hire somebody new for her own department... She's like you should look out for this job, and if you are hired, I will absolutely advocate for you to get sponsored. She's already looked into it, did research on it, and talked to HR. It's comforting.." – MA

Challenges from the Dimensions that Affect Emotional Wellness

- Education system
- Racial divide
- 3.0 discrimination
- No social support due to academic stress
- Underutilization of Career Service
- The sponsorship game
- The job search

Challenges of Being an International Student

- "Building life up from scratch"- Sam
- Safety
- Finance

References



Results cont.

Discrimination

"If someone says something racist, I find myself thinking about that for 2 days, I'm thinking about what I could do right now, make a complaint, and then I don't because it feels like it will come back to me in some way and just scared all the time." - Monica

Microaggression

- Coming from a place of Empathy
- "You speak English?!?!?" – MA

Help-Seeking Behavior

- Seeking Professional Help
 - Cultural Differences
 - "Finding a brown therapist. She understood the culture and everything. So, she understood a lot of things, and we could switch languages easily. I didn't really have to stick to English all the time.."- Piano Man
- Coping Skills
 - Junk food, sharing with someone, smoking, crying, journaling
- Who do you share it with?
 - "Acting" well in front of family to lessen worry
 - Friends

Discussion

- The holistic wellness model is used to understand the experience of Korean international graduate students (Koo et al., 2021)
 - Spiritual and Physical wellness impacted positively
 - Academic and Occupational wellness was impacted negatively
- Coping strategies (Yan, 2017)
 - Problem-focused
 - Emotion-focused

Limitations

- Did not explore lived experiences of participants from the LGBTQIA+ community

Future Research

- More research on this community is needed to gain insights into their mental well-being and coping strategies
- Advanced research into the lived experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community who identify as Asian Indian

Future Practices

- Education on the effect of being in a new culture and city on mental well-being
- Career Center "going the extra mile" in supporting international students.
- Transparency on the safety of the city
- Accessibility with transportation
- Globally competent counselors or recruiting counselors who are from this community