

Schizophrenia among Immigrants in Saudi Arabia

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Schizophrenia is an inherited progressive mental disorder that is characterized in terms of positive and negative symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, thought and movement disorders, flat affect, attention and focusing problems as well as problems with long term memory among many others. Although this mental illness is inherited, it is mainly caused by different negative environment influences. Schizophrenia rate among immigrants in Saudi Arabia is very low; in fact, these are locals who are likely to experience schizophrenia (Robinson, 2009). There are several major reasons for such difference including medical insurance, deportation and strict immigration rules.

Immigrants that are granted working visas in Saudi Arabia are usually hired by large companies due to their professionalism. They are, therefore, granted a medical insurance that enables immigrants to receive any medical help needed and prevent various diseases at the very beginning. This include mental illnesses. For those people that already have schizophrenia, special treatment and medicine is provided to suppress the symptoms (Townsend, 2011). That is the reason why the cases of schizophrenia among Saudi Arabia immigrants are rare opposing to the immigrants of other countries.

Employers in Saudi Arabia do not take responsibility for the health conditions of the working immigrants. Thus, any worker that starts showing signs of the mental illness is quickly deported back to their native country. This quick deportation reduces the number of immigrants experiencing a mental disorder. The employers are usually the ones to organize the deportation, although they may demand this form the agency that has invited the worker.

Saudi Arabia has very strict immigration rules and often refuses immigrants to enter the country. In such a way, a total number of immigrants in Saudi Arabia is significantly lower than

in other countries. Thus, immigration policies constrain the flow of those entering the country and limit the representative sampling for medical research (Sonmez, Apostopoulos, Tran & Rentropé, 2011).

Hannawi and Salmi (2013) state that the residents of Saudi Arabia are mostly ignorant people especially to the matters that concern foreigners who are considered to be of lower class. This attitude is specifically common among strict religious followers. They do not care about the health of the immigrants even if the health of their own employee is at stake. Illnesses of immigrants are ignored as long as the worker successfully performs at work. Employers will only bother when the symptoms worsen and the only way to solve the problem is to deport the immigrant. Hence, a lot of cases of schizophrenia are not reported that distorts the overall image of proliferation of mental diseases among immigrants.

To sum up, immigrants in Saudi Arabia live in different conditions compared to immigrants in other countries. Although Saudi Arabia's immigrants are granted medical insurance that maintains health of people, they may experience neglect from employer that may lead to deportation. Moreover, there are a lot of unrecorded cases of schizophrenia that make it impossible to define the real number of disease cases among immigrants.

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