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The effect of migration on cognitive representations of hypertension and dietary habits in African immigrant women in context of the self-regulatory model

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This literature review supports development of a theoretical construct that the processes of migration and acculturation in relation to perceptions of hypertension, dietary habits and life style behavior affect the health trajectory of immigrants to the United States and other western nations, specifically African immigrant women. Explanatory models such as the cognitive representation of illness (CR) and Leventhal's Self-Regulation Model (SRM) are reviewed in relation to perceptions of illness and dietary approaches to health in this population. The purpose is to facilitate understanding and development of culturally relevant preventive program for immigrants. The discussion will cover traditional African illness representations, which are based on beliefs that include natural and unnatural causes. It is expected these beliefs will influence the CR of hypertension, as well as dietary behavior (DASH Diet) associated with control of hypertension, among African immigrant women. The literature suggests that the process of acculturation exposes African immigrants to new knowledge that will modify their illness representation. A question to ask is if the CR modification is enough to influence coping patterns, adaptive outcomes and subsequent illness management? Programming and formal education are likely needed to modify the SRM in the case of special populations such as African immigrant women

Biography

Olubunmi I Daramola has completed her PhD in Nursing and Masters of Public Health degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is an Assistant Professor at the Wayne State University College of Nursing and board-certified Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner with expertise in health promotion risk reduction

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