Budhwani and team evaluate GAD in racial and ethnic minorities

Research on the correlates and causes of depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses have yielded mixed results in minority groups—who make up more than one third of the population of the United States—necessitating an understanding of causes and correlates of health. Therefore, the aim of a study led by Henna Budhwani, PhD, MPH, assistant professor in the Department of Health Care Organization and Policy—in collaboration with Kristine Ria Hearld, PhD, assistant professor in the School of Health Professions; and Daniel Chavez-Yenter, MPH, Program Coordinator at the Sparkman Center for Global Health—was to evaluate the relationship between minority status, contextual factors, and lifetime Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD).

Logistic regression models were implemented, comparing immigrants to their American-born counterparts as well as to American-born Whites. Foreign-born Afro-Caribbeans exhibited lower rates of lifetime GAD. A lower percentage of foreign-born minorities met the criteria for GAD as compared with their American-born counterparts, and all racial and ethnic groups met the criteria for lifetime GAD at a lower rate as compared with American-born Whites.

By using theory proactively and including contextual factors, this multi-faceted approach to health disparities research yielded findings that both supported historic beliefs but created opportunities for supplemental research looking at immigrants and GAD. Key findings were that health lifestyle choices and exposure to discrimination significantly affected the chance of having GAD. Nativity was protective; however, its effect was ameliorated by exposure to discrimination or engagement in alcohol abuse. Thus, this study offers practical insight into environmental factors for clinicians caring for racial and ethnic minorities diagnosed with GAD.

To read “Generalized Anxiety Disorder in Racial and Ethnic Minorities: A Case of Nativity and
Contextual Factors,” was published online in January 2015 in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*, click here.