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The Role of Race and Ethnicity in Leisure Participation Among Children and Youth with Disabilities: A Systematic Review

Presenter:

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Nargas Abdeahad: Hello everyone. My name is Nargas. I'm a woman with brown hair and eyeglasses, and today I'm wearing a white sweater with black stripes. I'm also from Toronto, Canada. Dr. Lindsay and I did a systematic review about the role of race and ethnicity in leisure participation among children and youth with disabilities. Next slide please. And before starting, I wish to acknowledge the land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississauga of the collective. Today, this place is still the home to many indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. Next slide, please.

Okay, so before starting, leisure is engaging in informal or structural play, recreational and leisure activities. Studies show that leisure can enhance future success, social emotional adjustment, physical wellbeing, and social inclusion of children and youth with disabilities. Next slide please. And specifically, a structured leisure can strengthen resilience, self-efficacy, independence, and more engagement in school. It can also develop friendship and relationship and social bonding, and it can develop identity for overcoming this stigma of disabilities. Now imagine a child who identified themselves as a pianist or a basketball player too, and it can also prepare young adults with disabilities for adult life. Next slide please.

However, studies show that children and youth with disability participate less in structured leisure activities. And when it comes to racial, ethnic, minoritized children and youth with disabilities, the rate of participation is significantly lower. For example, a study in the US showed that 65% of racial ethnic minoritized immigrant children with disabilities and 57% without disabilities never participated in any structured leisure activities at all. Next slide please. And it's a matter of concern. For example, imagine in a multicultural country like Canada that around 14% of children with disabilities are identified as racial minorities. They mostly experience worse school outcomes, higher levels of unemployment, lower social participation, and more health disparities. And we know that racial disparities persist into adulthood. So, lack of support may lead to more unemployment, social inclusion, and also health problems. Next slide please.

So, the objective of this systematic review was to explore the role of race and ethnicity in leisure participation among children and youth with disabilities. Next slide please. For this systematic review, we searched six international databases, and we just looked for peer review journal participation from January, 2000 to October, 2023, and we focus on children and youth up to age 21. But all kinds of disability was included, and we looked for empirical studies with at least one finding about the role of race in leisure participation. Next slide please. It is an overview of our research strategy. After identification, these studies, we did a screening, and some of the articles were excluded because they didn't meet the criteria. And we also reviewed the references of the included articles. So, we had 13 articles included in our review. Next slide please. About the characteristics of the studies. I can say that we could get access to the data of over 1000 participants, and the studies were conducted in six different countries. Eight were from the US, and the others from Canada, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Scotland, and South Africa. And different sorts of leisure activities were studied, but mainly the physical recreational activities, and one study focused on Latin dance, and two studies were about different kinds of recreational activities. Next slide please. About the race and ethnicity, five studies were about Hispanic populations, one study with Chinese majority. We had three studies with equitable distribution of racial groups, and three studies with white majority, and one study with racial representatives majority. Next one, please.

As I mentioned before, we included all types of disabilities. So we had physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism, asthma, cerebral palsy, developmental disabilities, visual impairment, emotional disorder, and also cognitive disabilities. Next one, please. And nine of the studies had qualitative design, and four studies had quantitative design. Next one. Some studies youth theory in their analysis, such as ecological theory, capital theory, grounded theory, and social control theory. Next slide please. The themes that we identified were rate of participation, factors affecting leisure participation, the benefits and impact of culture on leisure participation, and also intersectionality. Next one, please. About the rate of leisure participation, we categorized the studies to two categories. Four. Studies show that racial ethnic minorities participated less often in leisure activities. Some studies showed that they participated just once a month or didn't participate at all. And three studies showed that children and youth with disability participated less often, less than usual in in leisure activities, irrespective of the race. Next one. And the factors affecting leisure participation were mainly discrimination, stigmatization and racism, fear of harassment and safety, systemic factors, and disability-related factors. Next one. And about the discrimination stigmatization and racism. Parents, racial parents specifically, were worried about the negative attitudes or racism toward their children and even the children themselves. They felt embarrassed, ashamed, and vulnerable when they compared themselves with their peers. Next one, please.

And some parents because of their fear of harassment, limited leisure participation. Racial minority parents were worried that their children would be harassed or bullied by other children, or they limited the outdoor activities due to safety concerns. Next one, please. The systemic factors were about their restrictive community policies like limited facilities and resources, lack of information for racial minorities, and lack of competent professionals. Disability was a challenge both for children and youth and also their

parents. Children said that learning leisure skills take more time and sometimes make them tired. And also parents said that it was difficult to understand whether a leisure activity is pleasant or is another core for their children. And also the difference between chronological and developmental age, and communication and emotional level was also a challenge. Next one, please.

We also found that culture has both positive and negative impact on leisure participation. And also the study highlighted the parents' sense of advocacy and the importance of family participation. Next one, study shows that in some cultures, psychological and social benefits of leisure outweigh the health benefits. But in some other cultures it is important to have some health benefits and long-term health to be healthier adults is also important. Next one, about the barriers to leisure participation. Some of the racial minorities, people, especially immigrants, said that because of lack of culturally relevant activities and no trust in others to take care of their other children, so they prefer not to participate in activities. And for some of them they had other priorities. So leisure was not a priority in their culture, and in some cultures they consider leisure as a sort of distraction for working and it was useless. It is better to focus on working and education rather than leisure. Next one, please.

And about the parents. The role of mothers and fathers were also highlighted, and mothers think that in some cultures, mothers think that it is their personal responsibility to provide long-term support for their children. And also they did a lot of sacrifice. Some of them even left their marriage, and in some cultures also fathers did some sacrifice by leaving their job and spending more time with their kids. Next one, please. And we also found the importance of family participation, but it was just about the people with Hispanic background that family is the most important aspect of their lives. So we cannot expect a child to get engaged in a leisure activity and be excluded from the family. All of them should do a leisure as a family unit. Next one.

We also found the intersectionality between race, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status, and also gender. For example, a study shows that financial constraint is a major barrier to leisure participation for all Hispanic immigrant parents and also the parents in Guatemala. So it is really a main concern. On the next please. About the gender, a study in Canada shows that racial ethnic minoritized boys showed lower level of participation compared to girls. It is not clear why, and in some cultures, father were more overprotective of their daughters, and in some other cultures, mother were responsible for providing family leisure needs. Next one. So we concluded that racial ending minorities, children and youth with disabilities have low rate on leisure participation because of ableism, racism, systemic factors, cultural preferences, and limited financial resources. Next on. The study has some implications for rehabilitation centers. When you can understand what leisure means to racial ethnic minorities, we can facilitate meaningful and culturally sensitive leisure programs for them. However, it is a multifaceted approach that should involve parents, leisure providers, community stakeholders, and also children with disabilities. So we cannot decide alone about their leisure activities. Next one.

And designing some new leisure activities or adapting existing leisure programs to be aligned with the culture and preferences of racial ethnic minorities can increase the rate

of participation. And also it is important to enhance awareness of recreational providers about their personal beliefs, values, and prejudice because it can prevent racial discrimination and increase leisure participation. It has also some directions for the future research. It is valuable to know the impact of other races and ethnicities on leisure participation, and also what is the role of being an immigrant in leisure participation, especially in the countries like Canada and the US. And we have other kinds of leisure activities like music, art, or drama that it is valuable to know how minorities people will address these sort of leisures. The next one. This project was supported and funded by Shrek and the Kimel Family Fund. Next one, please. Thank you for listening to me. If you want to contact us, you can email us or visit our website for more information or questions. Thank you.