

A Theoretical Framework to Enhance Healthcare Utilization among International Students in the United States.

Presenters:

- **Oyebolu Akinkugbe , BDS, PGDipDPH, MPHc.**
- **Oluwatosin Marylyn Oduneye, MD, MPHc.**
- **Anita Bhatta, BDS, MPHc.**
- **Faculty Sponsor: Emmanuel Clottey, DrPH, MPH, CHES.**

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Rationale

- This proposed theoretical framework aims to address the healthcare utilization challenges faced by international students in the United States. These students encounter unique barriers to accessing and using healthcare services due to cultural, social, economic, and systemic factors.^{1,2}
- By developing a comprehensive framework, we aim to understand these influences better and provide practical insights for healthcare providers, policymakers, and university administrators to implement targeted interventions.
- Ultimately, this framework seeks to improve international students' overall well-being and academic success by enhancing their access to healthcare services.

Biblical Perspective

The Bible teaches us to have compassion, hospitality, and justice. By fostering a community of care and support for all individuals, we can work towards improving healthcare utilization among international students.

➤ Caring for Others and compassion.

Mark 12:31 ³

➤ Hospitality and Welcoming Strangers

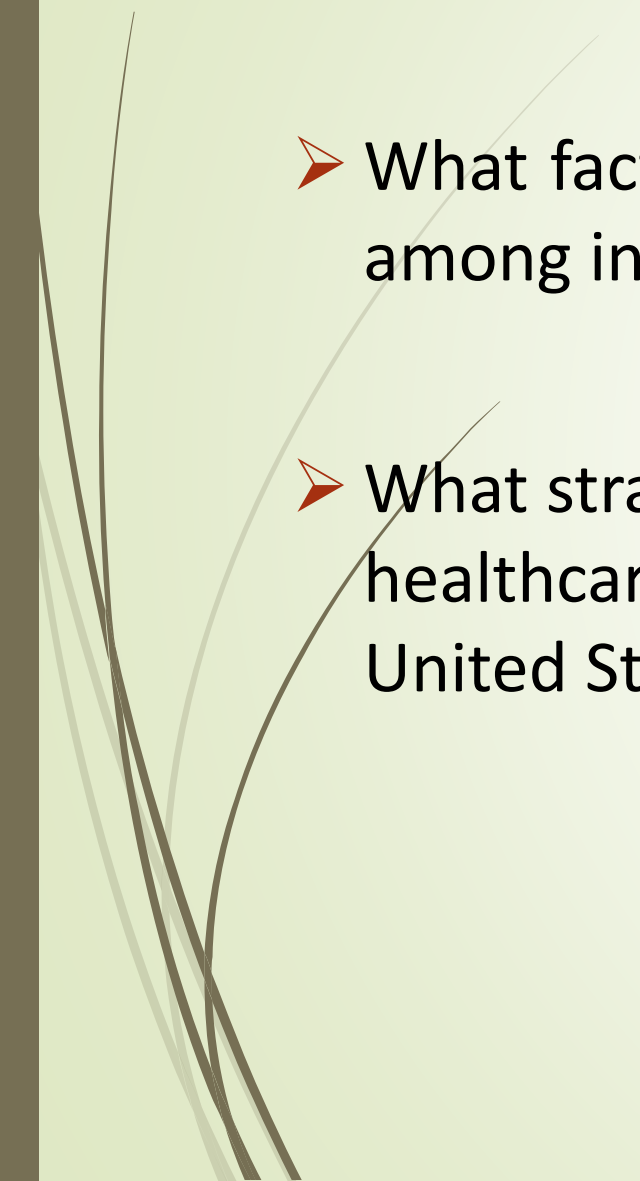
Hebrews 13:2 ⁴

➤ Justice and Equity

Isaiah 1:17 ⁵



Research Questions

- What factors at multiple levels influence healthcare utilization among international students in the United States?
 - What strategies can be employed at multiple levels to optimize healthcare utilization among international students in the United States?
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Background

- As of the 2022/2023 academic session, about 1,057,188 international students from about 210 countries are studying in the US.⁶
- 14 % increase in new international student enrollment was observed in U.S. for the academic session 2022/23, of which 57% were from China and India. ⁷
- Enrollment from Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 18% at the same time, with Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa showing the most growth. ⁷
- International students' diverse backgrounds and experiences pose unique challenges for healthcare providers in effectively addressing their healthcare needs. ⁸
- There are differences in health beliefs and practices between international and domestic students. ⁹

Research Method

- Internet searches of health-related search engines were conducted.
- Years of Study: 2014- 2024
- Inclusion Criteria:
 - Time frame- the last ten years
 - Publication type- peer-reviewed articles
 - Relevance to research topic
 - Geographical scope: United States of America
 - Population- International students
 - Methodology- Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed.
 - Language- Published in English or with English translations.
- Search Engines: PubMed, Google Scholar, Jerry Falwell Library databases
- Search Terms: Factors influencing healthcare utilization, International Students, United States.
- Results were streamlined to meet inclusion criteria and analyzed.

Results

- The search yielded relevant articles from PubMed, Google Scholar, and LU Jerry Falwell databases.
- At the individual level, 5 were selected out of 44 articles. ⁹⁻¹⁴
- At the interpersonal and community levels, 18 articles were selected out of 17,800 articles. ¹⁵⁻³³
- At the institutional and policy levels, 4 articles were selected out of 115 articles. ³⁴⁻³⁷

Factors of Influence – Socioecological Model

Personal Level

- Financial Constraints, Health literacy, Language barrier, Lack of understanding of the US healthcare system, Limited insurance (non-dental, non-vision cover), Accessibility/Transportation^{2,9-14,15,21}.

Interpersonal Level

- Social support, Cultural beliefs/norms, Acculturation stress, Peer influence, Family support and influence, Health beliefs and practices, Stigma and discrimination^{9,15-33, 35}.

Community Level

- Cultural competency of healthcare providers, Community resources, Cultural diversity, and acceptance, Healthcare infrastructure and support services, Community health promotion programs, Accessibility of transportation, and Community network supports^{12,15-33,36}.

Institutional Level

- Accessibility of healthcare services, Quality of care, Health insurance coverage and policies, Cultural competency of healthcare providers, Language access and communication support, Cultural sensitivity in healthcare settings, Educational and outreach programs, Student health and promotion programs^{10,12,34-37}.

Policy Level

- Immigration policies and regulations, Campus policies/health services plans, Visa restriction on employment, Financial support, Institutional health policies/regulations, Healthcare funding and resource allocation, Legal protections and anti-discrimination policies^{1,34-37}.

Interventions - Socioecological Model

Personal Level

- Culturally Tailored Healthcare Programs
- Health Education Initiatives
- Enhanced Access to Healthcare

Interpersonal Level

- Mentorship Programs
- Peer Support Programs

Community Level

- Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Create Campus Resources that encourage healthcare utilization

Institutional Level

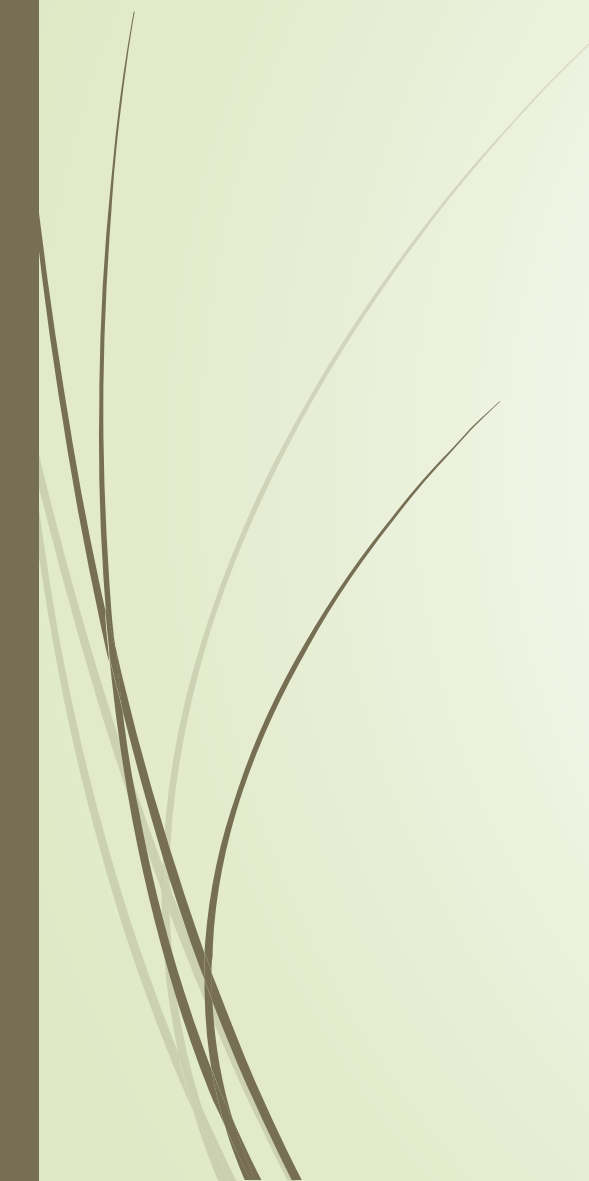
- Establishment of Multicultural Health Centers
- Student Health Insurance Advocacy
- Health Promotion Expansion
- Cultural Competency Training for Healthcare Providers

Policy Level

- Immigration Policy Reform Support
- Policy Advocacy and Institutional Support
- Research and Evaluation



Limitations to Study

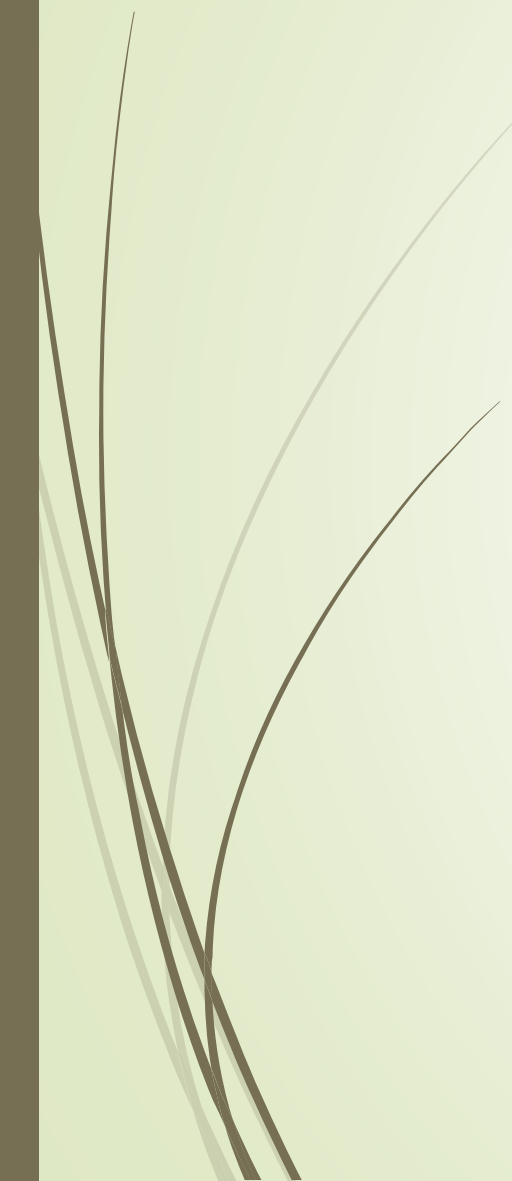
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- Limited availability of literature.
 - Lack of recent data
 - Potential bias in search methodology.
 - Heterogeneity of available literature.
 - Limited diversity of perspectives.
 - Potential publication bias.

Recommendations

- Recommendations aim to create a supportive environment for international students' health and well-being.
- Individual Level: Train international students on how to effectively navigate the US healthcare system
- Interpersonal Level: Facilitate peer support networks and mentorship programs.
- Community Level: Foster partnerships with local healthcare providers.
- Institutional Level: Provide cultural competency training for healthcare providers.
- Policy Level: Advocate for national baseline data collection and policy changes at national and institutional levels. Advocate for comprehensive health insurance policies.



Conclusion

- Various factors at multiple levels influence healthcare utilization among international students in the United States.
 - Using the socioecological model, various strategies can be employed at multiple levels to optimize healthcare utilization among international students in the United States.
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