

## Acculturation Impact on Mental Health Among Arab Americans

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Arab Americans, who include immigrants, refugees, or U.S. born persons of Middle Eastern or North African descent, may experience significant difficulties during acculturation to Western society. Influential stressors include relocation, loss of social support, language barriers, and economic factors, all of which can impact mental health. There is limited research investigating the effects of acculturation on the mental health of the Arab American population. Objectives: The purpose of this study is to identify ways in which acculturation impacts the mental health of Arab Americans, specifically the development of depression and anxiety. Method: A literature search was conducted using PubMed and PsycArticles (ProQuest), utilizing the following search terms: "Arab Americans," "Arabs," "mental health," "depression," "anxiety," "acculturation." Thirty-nine articles were identified and of those, nine specifically investigated the relationship between acculturation and mental health in Arab Americans. Three of the nine focused exclusively on depression. Results: Several risk factors were identified that contribute to poor mental health associated with acculturation, which include immigrant or refugee status, facing discrimination, and religious ideology. Protective factors include greater levels of acculturation, being U.S. born, and greater heritage identity. Greater mental health disorders were identified in Arab Americans compared to normative samples, perhaps particularly depression; none of the articles specifically addressed anxiety. Conclusion: The current research findings support the potential association between the process of acculturation and greater levels of mental health disorders in Arab Americans. However, the diversity of the Arab American population makes it difficult to draw consistent conclusions. Further research needs to be conducted in order to assess which subgroups in the Arab American population are at highest risk for developing new or exacerbating existing mental health disorders in order to devise more effective interventions.

**Keywords :** arab americans, arabs, mental health, anxiety, depression, acculturation

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