

Mental Health in Young People Living Poverty in Southeastern Mexico

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Abstract : Attention, comprehension and solution of poverty can be worked considering a socioeconomic approach; but it also can be attended from a multidimensional perspective that allows considering other dimensions including psychological variables manifested in behaviors, thoughts and feelings concerning this phenomenon. Considering the importance of research regarding psychology and poverty, this paper presents results about psychosocial impacts of poverty on young people related to mental health issues and its relation to fatalism. These results are part of a bigger transcultural study done in collaboration with the Federal University of Cear´, in Brazil. Participants were 101 young men and women, between 12 and 29 years old, living in two emarginated suburbs in Mérida, Mexico, located in the southeastern zone of the country. Participants responded the Self Report Questionnaire (SRQ- 20), with 20 items dichotomous presence/absence that assess anxious and depressive issues and the Fatalism Scale, with 30 items Likert five-point spread over five factors. Results show that one third of participants mentioned to get easily frightened, feeling nervous, tense or worried as well as unhappy, difficulty on making decisions, and troubles in thinking clearly. About 20% mentioned to have headaches, to sleep badly, to cry more than usual and to feel tired all the time. Regarding Fatalism, results show there is a greater internal allocation and lower external attribution in young participants, but they have some symptoms regarding poor mental health. Discussion is in terms of possible explanations about the results and emphasizes the importance of holistic approaches for a better understanding of the psychosocial impacts of poverty on young people and strengthening the resilience to increase positive mental health in emarginated contexts, where Community Psychology could have an important duty in community health promotion.

Keywords : fatalism, mental health, poverty, youth

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