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Somali Refugee Interpretations of Trauma-Related Mental Illness: Similarities and Differences Between the Somali Concepts of 'Murugo Joogto' and 'Qulub' and PTSD

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***Somali Refugee Interpretations of trauma-related Mental Illness:
Similarities and Differences between the Somali concepts of 'Murugo
Joogto' and 'Qulub' and PTSD***

Anthropology, Psychology

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There has been growing interest in studying the psychological impact of trauma on refugees, but studies that combine quantitative psychological methods with qualitative anthropological methods to determine cultural influences on the psychological expression of this trauma are rare. Although post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been studied extensively since the Vietnam war, most of the studies have excluded the impact of culture on the definition, experience, and manifestation of trauma. In this investigation, Somali refugees were studied to identify their cultural interpretation of psychological reactions to traumatic experiences. Specifically, this research is directed at understanding two culturally-identified disorders, Murugo Joogto and Qulub, from the Somali perspective and comparing them to PTSD. Somali refugees took part in a semi-structured interview in which questions were directed at determining how they experience these two disorders and then completed the PC-PTSD questionnaire in verbal format and the DSM IV-TR to determine their similarities and differences. An important goal of this work is to provide data important to the proper diagnosis and treatment of Somali victims of trauma. The predicted outcome of this research lies within the identification that diagnosing Somali refugees with PTSD damages their psychological health further by introducing the factor of community ostracization. The findings will clarify that although symptoms of Murugo Joogto and Qulub are similar to PTSD, the way they Somali people identify with the mental health experience will express itself as an avoidance of being labeled by their community but rather identification with either Murugo Joogto or Qulub.