

Asian Rainbow Youth in New Zealand: Protective Factors

Abstract

Purpose: To explore the impacts of double minority status (ethnic and sexual/gender minority) and protective factors associated with the emotional wellbeing and mental health of Asian Rainbow (sexual/gender minority) youth in New Zealand.

Methods: The data were extracted from the Youth19 Rangatahi survey, which surveyed 7,374 students from 45 mainstream secondary schools. The comparison groups were Asian non-Rainbow youth and Pakeha (New Zealand European) Rainbow youth. A secondary analysis was performed examining the associations between postulated protective factors and the emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes of Asian Rainbow youth.

Results: Asian Rainbow youth had higher odds of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and attempts and lower odds of good emotional wellbeing compared to Asian non-Rainbow youth. However, Asian Rainbow youth had lower odds of anxiety compared to Pakeha Rainbow youth. Among Asian Rainbow youth, family acceptance and feeling safe at school were associated with higher odds of good emotional wellbeing, and lower odds of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Several other protective factors were also associated with 1 or more (but not all) of the emotional wellbeing and mental health indicators.

Discussion: This study suggests that family acceptance and feeling safe at school may serve as important buffers mitigating risks of adverse emotional wellbeing experienced by Asian Rainbow youth.