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## PREVENTIVE HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

### MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS AMONG BANGLADESHI MIGRANT WORKERS IN SINGAPORE: A FOCUS GROUP STUDY

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In Singapore, there are many semi-skilled migrant workers from neighbouring countries employed in blue-collar industries such as construction and manufacturing<sup>1</sup>. Many of these migrant workers face stress from various sources, including their difficult work circumstances, leaving the state of their mental health in question. Furthermore, there is a need for mental health to be studied in the context of culture. Recognising this need, this study used a culture-centred approach to understand the mental health of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore through their lived experiences of stress. Five focus group discussions were conducted with 24 participants from HealthServe - a local non-profit organisation that provides services to vulnerable migrant workers. Participants were middle-aged Bangladeshi men; most have worked in Singapore for at least five years in various industries, notably construction. Semi-structured interviews investigated their sources, perceptions and coping mechanisms of stress. Verbatim transcriptions of the focus group discussions were thematically analysed. Our findings show that, although the sources, perceptions and coping mechanisms of stress are largely influenced by the migrants' collectivistic culture, it is not necessarily predictive. We used the Socio-Ecological Model to analyse the sources, perceptions and coping mechanisms of stress in order to propose mental health intervention recommendations for non-profit organisations. Although the focus group discussions were limited by cultural and language barriers, the results provided novel insights into their lived experiences of stress and suggest further research ideas that are necessary in this field, especially in the context of culture.

<sup>1</sup> Fillinger, T., Harrigan N., Chok, S., Amirrudin, A., Meyer, P., Rajah, M. and Fordyce, D. (2017). Labour Protection for the Vulnerable: An Evaluation of the Salary and Injury Claims System for Migrant Workers in Singapore. *Transient Workers Count Too*.

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