

West Chester University

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4-27-2020

### Enhancing African Student Well-Being and Success

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## Background

- African Immigrant students contribute to the diversity of West Chester University (WCU); however, African Immigrant students are oftentimes not treated as a distinct group from African Americans, masking unique issues this group faces.
- Significant research has demonstrated that African immigrant health declines with increasing time in the U.S.
- African immigrant students face a unique set of stressors associated with adapting to life in the US, managing family relationships across borders, and becoming a racial minority.
- Assessing the impediments to African immigrant student success is thus necessary to promote the well-being, retention, and graduation of this vulnerable population.

## Objectives

- Enhance African immigrant student adjustment to college, well-being, retention, and graduation by identifying sources of stress for this segment of the WCU student population.
- Assess stressors and cultural factors that influence student well-being and retention in African immigrant students
- Recommend ways WCU can better promote African immigrant student well-being and retention by elucidating social support needs of this population

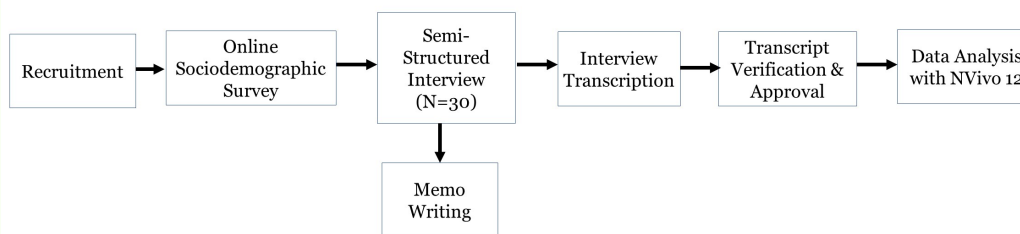
## Data

- 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews
- Inclusion Criteria: Born in sub-Saharan Africa, aged 18+, enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at WCU, completed  $\geq 1$  semester at WCU.



Descriptive Statistics of Participants (N=17)		
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Region	East Africa	3
	Central Africa	1
	West Africa	13
	Southern Africa	0
Time living in US	< 5 years	1
	5-10 Years	5
	11-15 Years	5
	> 15 Years	4
Send Remittances?	Yes	8
	No	7
Working	Yes	13
	No	4
Hours Per Week	<40 Hours	8
	$\geq 40$ Hours	4

## Methods



### Interview Sections

Section I: Sociodemographic Information  
 Section II: Family and Pre-migration Background  
 Section III: The Migration Process  
 Section IV: Cultural Beliefs on Health

Section IV: Transnationalism and Ethnic Identity  
 Section V: Racialization Processes/Doctor/Patient  
 Section VIII: Sources of Stress/Social Support

## Preliminary Results

During the qualitative analysis the various themes began to emerge:

- My main source of stress is the expectation [my parents] put on me. Again, I don't think they intentionally do it, but I think because these people left everything they have to come and make sure you have a better life.* –Female, Liberia
- Not a day [goes by where people don't call]. Sometimes before you wake up you already have five, six missed calls. All from home and maybe all those calls are for money.* – Male, Sierra Leone
- I financially support my mom and I'm currently not working. So, I feel bad when she's like "I need something" and sometimes I don't have that much to help her with. It hurts me but there is nothing I can do about it.* –Female, Ghana
- I: Why do you think health care providers aren't nice or don't care? R: If you're new in a country and you go to a hospital, what you say to the person that is supposed to treat you, they won't understand what you are trying to say to them. What they say to you, you won't understand it.* -Female, Liberia
- I: How was your experience using those services? R: It was good, a little bit. I just didn't like the fact that I was charged for a visit although I didn't get anything.* -Male, Nigeria

## WCU Recommendations

- WCU Mental Health Services need to have awareness of stressors this subpopulation faces and serve this group in a culturally competent manner.
- WCU Student Health Services should have no co-pay, have increased African immigrant staff, and require cultural competence training to better serve African students.
- The Center for International Programs and WCU Student Health Services should provide orientation on the health service pay structure, scope of services offered, and where to go in emergency situations.