INTRODUCTION

- In Canada, South Asian men and women have the highest reported rate of unmet mental healthcare needs (Gadalla, 2010).
- In this population there exists high rates of mental illness, yet disproportionately low use of mental health services (Islam, Khanbu, & Tamim, 2014).
- Two potential explanatory variables that have not received much research attention: emotional expressiveness and acculturation
- Help-seeking research indicates that those who express their emotions openly (i.e., high emotional expressiveness) are more likely to seek help for their mental health concerns (Leff, 1973).
- Acculturation has also been found to influence help-seeking behaviour in South Asians. Mainstream acculturation was positively correlated with how often South Asians used mental health services (Frey & Roysecar, 2005).
- However, currently there exists no research on the link between acculturation levels, emotional expressivity, and help-seeking beliefs and behaviours in South Asians, who represent the largest ethnic minority group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009).
- To help better understand why this gap exists between high rates of mental illness and low use of mental health resources among the Canadian South Asian population, this study examined the association between acculturation, emotional expressiveness, and help-seeking behaviour in a South Asian and Euro-Canadian student sample.

HYPOTHESES:

- H1: In comparison to South Asian students, Euro-Canadians will have higher levels of emotional expressivity.
- H2: Euro-Canadians will endorse more positive attitudes towards help seeking, compared to South Asians.
- H3: Within each group, individuals with higher levels of mainstream acculturation will have higher levels of emotional expressivity.
- H4: Individuals with higher levels of mainstream acculturation will endorse more positive attitudes towards help seeking.
- H5: Individuals with higher levels of emotional expressivity will endorse more positive attitudes towards help seeking.

METHOD

Participants:
- 83 undergraduate students at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC). Inclusion criteria: Must identify as Euro-Canadian or South Asian

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Euro-Canadian</th>
<th>Canadian-born South Asian</th>
<th>Non-Canadian-born South Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (% female)</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years); mean (SD)</td>
<td>18.06 (2.79)</td>
<td>18.74 (3.89)</td>
<td>18.71 (4.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada (%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Citizenship %</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (years); mean (SD)</td>
<td>13.06 (1.03)</td>
<td>13.23 (1.15)</td>
<td>12.89 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures:

ACCULTURATIONAL MEASURE
- The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA; Ryder, Aitken, & Paulhus, 2000)
- 20-item bidimensional measure of acculturation. Items load onto two separate subscales:
  - Heritage Subscale: extent to which respondents identify with their culture of origin.
    - e.g.: “I often participate in my culture’s traditions”
  - Mainstream Subscale: extent to which respondents identify with Canadian mainstream culture.
    - e.g.: “I often participate in mainstream Canadian traditions”

EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVITY MEASURES

The Emotional Expressivity Scale (EES; King, Smith, & Neale, 1994)
- 17-item self-report questionnaire measures outward expression of emotions.
  - e.g.: “I display my emotions to other people”

Help Seeking Measure

The Beliefs About Psychological Services Scale (BAPS; Ægisdóttir & Gerstein, 2009)
- 18-item questionnaire examining individual’s beliefs regarding the outcome of therapy, labeling (negative views), and the influence of stigmas surrounding therapy that impact service use.

Results

Table 1. Reliability of the VIA Mainstream Subscale, EES, BAPS Subscales, AEE, and BAPS Expertness subscales by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Euro-Canadian</th>
<th>Canadian-born South Asian</th>
<th>Non-Canadian-born South Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIA – Mainstream</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EES</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ Negative</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ Positive</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ Impulse</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEE</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAPS Intent</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAPS Stigma</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAPS Expertness</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

- Together, these findings suggest a relationship does exist between emotional expressivity and one's attitudes towards help seeking.
- Our findings build upon the limited research on the Canadian South Asian population, and support why more research needs to be done in these domains.
- Key limitations: small sample size, predominantly female (88%), non-clinical population first year psychology students, validity of questionnaires.
- Further research should examine the influence culture may have on the expression of certain types of emotions (e.g., negative vs. positive).
- Research on how acculturation and emotional expressivity may influence help seeking behaviour in this population can have a direct effect on improving the provision of culturally sensitive care.

REFERENCES

- The British Journal of Psychiatry, 123 (574), 299-306.
- BMC Psychiatry, 14.
- Counseling Psychology Quarterly
- Psychological Reports, 80, 809-810.

CONCLUSIONS

- Taken together, these findings suggest a relationship does exist between emotional expressivity and one’s attitudes towards help seeking.
- Our findings build upon the limited research on the Canadian South Asian population, and support why more research needs to be done in these domains.
- Key limitations: small sample size, predominantly female (88%), non-clinical population first year psychology students, validity of questionnaires.
- Further research should examine the influence culture may have on the expression of certain types of emotions (e.g., negative vs. positive).
- Research on how acculturation and emotional expressivity may influence help seeking behaviour in this population can have a direct effect on improving the provision of culturally sensitive care.