

Symposium | Immigrant, Refugee : [Symposium 5] A Cross-cultural Comparison of the Impact of Immigration on Parent-Child Relationships in Japan, Spain, and the U.S.

2025年9月25日(木) 13:05 ~ 14:35 Session Room 6 (Conference Room B)

[Symposium 5] A Cross-cultural Comparison of the Impact of Immigration on Parent-Child Relationships in Japan, Spain, and the U.S.

Moderator: Nelida Tanaka (Yotsuya Yui Clinic), Cheiron McMahill (Kannon Healing Counseling)

Discussant: Chizuko Tezuka

[SY-5-01] The impact of immigration on Spanish-speaking Latin American families to Japan- with particular consideration to the experience of familial separation in children and youth

*Nelida Tanaka¹ (1. Yotsuya Yui Clinic (Japan))

キーワード : Migration、Latin American Nikkei children and parents、Loss and separation、Family-centered approach

This study investigates the psychological impact of migration on Latin American Nikkei children residing in Japan, with particular emphasis on how familial separations affect mental health and the processes involved in rebuilding parent-child connections. Utilizing a retrospective mixed-method approach, data were collected from 47 cases who received monthly outreach counseling in a region with high concentration of Latin American migrant workers. Counseling sessions were conducted in Spanish and Japanese, and most children were brought by their parents. Findings indicate that the majority of children were second-generation immigrants, primarily from Peru and Bolivia. Problems brought were 12 with school truancy. Less frequently reported issues included symptoms suggesting autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disability (ID), and academic difficulties. A significant portion of the sample experienced familial disruption: 38% had experienced physical separation from one or both parents, and 51% had parents who were divorced or separated. These disruptions contributed to emotional difficulties, including feelings of abandonment, guilt, and resentment. A vignette highlights how joint-family counseling sessions helped uncover unexpressed emotions and facilitated open communication. These sessions normalized behaviors often misinterpreted as defiance or indifference, and showed that emotional reconciliation required more than physical reunification. Counseling revealed that long periods of separation strained parent-child bonds, and rebuilding trust and emotional closeness demanded an active engagement and emotional processing on both sides. Additionally, the study underscores the need to support immigrant families in navigating unfamiliar educational and healthcare systems. Outreach efforts included connecting families with appropriate institutional resources, aiming to reduce cultural and systemic barriers. The findings call for culturally sensitive, family-centered mental health services tailored to the unique experiences of migrant populations in Japan.