

L. SECTION VI SUMMARY

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in Dearborn, Michigan has established itself as a prime research center for mental health needs and resources for migrant and native-born Arab Americans. Many of the significant papers were presented either by ACCESS staff or in collaboration with local universities with whom ACCESS has close relationships. This conference, designed, organized, and funded by ACCESS, was the third in a series of collaborative meetings involving researchers from the Middle East who shared their findings with colleagues in the United States and then became acquainted with the status of the Arab community in this country. Thus, ACCESS is playing a pivotal role in an international exchange of research and collaboration.

In this portion of the conference, mental health papers addressed many important issues: coping mechanisms

of elder Arab Americans; the stigma of a severe mental health diagnosis on Arab-American clientele; the impact of religious fasting on pregnant Muslim women; and the effects of acculturation and religiosity on second generation Arab Americans, to name a few. Researchers addressed topics critical to the emotional well-being of the community. However, many questions do remain unanswered. For instance, what acculturation pattern is beginning to emerge among the Arab-American community in the Dearborn area?¹ Is a bicultural strategy the norm for native-born children, whereas migrants employ a variety of accommodations? Another question is whether Arab Americans are utilizing mental health services at rates comparable to other community mental health centers in the greater Detroit area.² An even broader question looms overhead: what impact does the so-called "War on Ter-

rorism" have on the Arab-American community? Is the profiling of Middle Eastern people affecting the ability of the community to identify and acculturate with American society? How are the dual rigidities of Christian fundamentalism and Muslim extremism affecting the usual "safe harbor" the United States offers to refugees?³ Thus, this 3rd Biennial Conference addressed many critical questions, but the 4th Biennial Conference will invite an even deeper and more varied investigation.

REFERENCES

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