

# Colonialism in Healthcare: Experiences of Filipino Americans

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## Background

- Filipino Americans experience health disparities despite having favorable social determinants of health (SDOH).<sup>1,2</sup>
- The history of colonization and imperialism in the Philippines has left a legacy of internalized racism known as colonial mentality (CM).<sup>3,4</sup>
- Few studies have investigated the role of CM as a SDOH or its impact in shaping Filipino Americans' healthcare experiences.

## Purpose

This study aims to examine how colonial mentality impacts Filipino Americans' healthcare experiences and contributes to structural and interpersonal barriers to health.

## Methods

**Design:** Interpretive Description Qualitative Design

**Recruitment:** Snowball sampling was used to recruit Filipino American adults (>=18) who have used a U.S.-based health system for care provisions

**Data Collection:** 23 semi-structured interviews conducted virtually, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim

- Data Analysis:** Coded and analyzed transcripts using ATLAS.ti
- First round coding: descriptive codes used to label segments of text
  - Second round coding: review codes for relationships, interpret text and form categories of codes to identify themes
  - Thematic Analysis performed via framework of Sikolohiyang Pilipino

## Results and Conclusion

- Four themes were identified:
  - 1) Healthcare as an experience of kapwa
  - 2) Healthcare as a transactional experience
  - 3) Healthcare as a collective experience
  - 4) Healthcare and navigating one's colonial identity
- Colonial mentality and Filipino cultural values interact to shape Filipino American healthcare experiences.
- Misalignment exists between kapwa (relationship-based care) and a transactional healthcare system, often experienced as hierarchical, impersonal, and commodified.
- Within a transactional system, collectivist values (deference, self-sacrifice, harmony) can constrain patients' personal agency and self-advocacy.
- These dynamics shape how Filipino Americans express and navigate their colonial identity within the healthcare system.

**Addressing colonial mentality in Filipino American healthcare experiences requires prioritizing relationship-centered care rather than transactional approaches to better support patient agency and self-advocacy.**

