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**A Model Minority?**

**Chinese Youth and Mental Health Services in New Zealand.**

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**A doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the**

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## ABSTRACT

The 'model minority' label given to Chinese populations in New Zealand and other Western countries have made it difficult to truly comprehend the difficulties faced by some Chinese ethnic minorities. Despite comparable rates and types of mental health problems to their European counterparts, identifiable barriers have led to Chinese ethnic minorities underutilising mental health services. The present study investigated the mental health service utilisation in native- and foreign-born Chinese youth in New Zealand, paying particular attention to barriers to service utilisation and viable solutions for these difficulties. It consisted of three individual projects and explored the views of Chinese community and mental health professionals and Chinese university students, comparing their perspectives to university students of other ethnicities. Findings showed that despite a willingness to seek help from their family and mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists, school counsellors), respondents identified a myriad of obstacles to the help seeking of Chinese youth. These included *physical barriers* (e.g., financial and transport constraints), *personal barriers* (e.g., stigma, problems accepting their difficulties), *service barriers* (e.g., paucity of knowledge regarding mental health problems and available services) and *family barriers* (e.g., obstruction from family members). *Family* and *service barriers* distinguished the difficulties faced by Chinese in comparison to European youth, particularly with regards to the adherence of professionals to stereotypes of Chinese youth, a unique finding of this study. In order to reduce such barriers, the Chinese university students and professionals advocated for greater education regarding mental health problems and services in the Chinese community, education for Chinese parents regarding adolescent issues, an increase in the number of practicing Chinese professionals that is coupled with improved cross-cultural training for non-Chinese professionals, as well as individual assessment and treatment approaches with Chinese youth and their families.

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