

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology with an emphasis in Clinical-Community Psychology

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M.A., Psychological Sciences, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2020
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Engagement in Mental Health Research: The Role of Mental Health Awareness and Perceived Intervention Stigma in Clinical Research Engagement Among African American Faith Communities

Date: December 7, 2023
Time: 12:00PM CT – 2:00PM CT
Place: Remote

Abstract

The dearth of participation in clinical research by marginalized racial and ethnic groups is a commonly cited limitation of research studies. Various reasons explaining these lower rates have been explored, with major focus being placed on sociocultural factors and methodological issues of study design. To better understand research engagement among marginalized groups, this study proposed a mixed methods design examining the roles of mental health awareness and perceived intervention stigma on the capacity to engage in clinical research among a sample of African American faith community members. The primary aims were to: 1) examine the associations between and predictive roles of mental health awareness and perceived intervention stigma on clinical research engagement; 2) evaluate the moderating role of perceived intervention stigma; and 3) examine focus group transcripts for themes delineating facilitators and barriers to clinical research engagement. The final sample included 143 African American faith community members ($M_{age} = 51.02$, $SD = 17.20$; 76% female). Mental health awareness was negatively correlated with perceived intervention stigma ($r = -.17$) and likelihood of participating in clinical research was influenced by the interaction of mental health awareness and perceived intervention stigma ($\beta = .24$). Perceived intervention stigma was also found to moderate the relationship between mental health awareness and clinical research engagement ($\beta = -.32$). Qualitative findings supported the significant role played by mental health awareness and stigma in influencing community likelihood of participating in clinical research. Transcripts provided additional data outlining how research could be improved to address longstanding issues of cultural mistrust and exploitation of marginalized groups by research entities.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Matthew Taylor, Ph.D., Committee Chairperson
Emily Gerstein, Ph.D., Committee Member
Devin Banks, Ph.D., Committee Member
Alfiee Breland-Noble Ph.D., MHSc., Committee Member