Muslim youth in New Zealand experienced less stress and better adaptation than Muslim youth in the UK.

In both countries, being stressed from adapting to their new host culture meant youth were less satisfied with their life and exhibited more behavioural problems.

Having a strong family congruence and sense of commitment helped reduce behaviour problems and facilitated better adaptation. However, there is a tipping point where familial obligations become too stressful and can actually lead to an increase in behaviour problems and poorer adaptation.

Main research findings

Relevance of findings to New Zealand

As Muslims comprise 5% of the population in New Zealand and are the largest religious minority group, they make up an important part of the immigrant population.

The fact that Muslim youth in New Zealand are adjusting better than those in the UK could be partly due to the fact that New Zealand has different integration policies, and generally New Zealanders tend to be more tolerant and receptive to diversity than their UK counterparts.

There may exist an optimal level where family connection can help facilitate positive adjustment, but that too much involvement and pressure to meet expectations, while trying to adapt to their new environment, can actually cause more stress.

The context of the family and the nation influence adaptation of Muslim immigrant youth. It is important for practitioners to consider the influence that family has on youth adaptation and how families can help this process, while decreasing the negative impacts.