Demography of Migration and Health Specialty Exam

Instructions: Please answer 1 question in each of the three groups below. You have 4 hours to complete the exam. The best of luck!

Group 1

1. (a) Summarize what is known, or suspected, concerning the effects of migration on the health of individuals in communities of origin and of receiving communities. (b) Based on existing theories and empirical research concerning the migration process, including the role of remittances and other contact between sending and host communities, identify key variables that you would focus on in designing a study to assess the impact of migration on the health levels of sending communities.

2. As mentioned by Bhugra, “Migration is and can be a very stress-inducing phenomenon. Yet not all migrants go through the same process.” Describe and discuss the main trends in the literature concerning critical contextual and individual level characteristics associated with variations in the mental health impacts of migration. To assist in structuring your answer:
   A. In your opinion, what are the two or three most important individual characteristics underlying variations in the mental health effects of migration? (hint - tie in supporting literature)
   B. In your opinion, what are the two or three most important contextual or community effects associated with variations in the mental health impacts of migration?
   C. Very briefly, how do the issues described in A and B work together to help us understand the quote by Bhugra?

Group 2

3. Acculturation is a concept that has been used to explain various outcomes related to migration and the incorporation of groups into a host society. It is a process that occurs both within one generation and over several generations. (a) In general terms, discuss the use of the concept of acculturation in studies of immigration and incorporation and discuss its potential utility in assessing differential health levels among immigrant groups. (b) Critique the concept in terms of its theoretical utility and potential confound with other health-related economic and social factors. The question really is, are any aspects of the theoretical construct of acculturation, and more specifically which of its dimensions or components, useful in understanding improvements or declines in health levels among immigrants over time?

4. Much of the scientific literature articulating the relationship between migration and health focuses on physical health (e.g., infant mortality, old-age mortality, and HIV transmission). Much less attention has been directed at the relationship between migration and mental health. Lay out the conceptual ways – perhaps developing a
conceptual framework -- in which physical and mental health are associated with migration, paying attention to migration both as a consequence and antecedent of health. Discuss the similarities and differences in how physical and mental health are thought to be associated with migration.

Group 3

5. Substantial debate in epidemiology and demography has grown up around the Hispanic epidemiological paradox. Much of the debate centers on the nature of the relationship between migration and health. What is the Hispanic epidemiological paradox and what are its core explanations? Discuss the evidence in support of these explanations, and identify current gaps in knowledge.

6. Very briefly, what are the similarities and differences in the US between male and female trends in self-reported physical health among the foreign-born? Using the literature to justify your argument, what are the three most important explanations for variations in self-reported physical health between foreign-born males and females.