Migrant-sensitive or migration-aware?

Building capacity for culturally pertinent health care

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Migration and health

- **Migrant health**: the health of individual migrants
- **Public health**: the ways in which migration can affect the health of populations
- **Systems responses** to migration and health
- **Global governance** of migration and health

An effective response requires consideration of these four components.

A migration-aware approach to health

A whole-health system response whereby population movement is embedded as a central concern in the design of interventions, policy and research.
MIGRANT-SENSITIVE
A predominantly facility-based response that considers migrants a vulnerable, homogenous and static population requiring specialised, culturally competent responses.

- Individual focus & vulnerability-oriented: risks further stigmatising migrant populations
- Viewed as a homogenous population; focus on international migrants
- Migrants often considered ‘static’
- Emphasis on cultural competency
- Focus on facility-level responses; limited systems response
- Potentially stigmatising

MIGRATION-AWARE
A whole-health system response whereby population movement is embedded as a central concern in the design of interventions, policy and research.

- Population focus & public health approach
- Heterogeneity of migrant populations acknowledged; consideration of internal migrants
- Recognition of spatial & temporal aspects of migration
- Systems response

RIGHT-TO-HEALTH FOCUS
Without careful messaging, migrants may be perceived as sick, a burden on services, and in a larger number than they are.

MIGRATION & HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES
Facilitate the mainstreaming of migration into health governance and health into existing migration governance systems.
Domain 1: People-centredness

Competency standard 1: Provides people-centred health care to refugees and migrants

Behaviours

1.1. Adapts practice to the needs of the person in view of their migration and displacement experiences, taking into consideration the impact of their experiences on access to health care, including barriers to access.

1.2. Adapts practice to the needs of refugees and migrants in view of their individual characteristics, including the intersection of sex, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation and legal status, taking into account social determinants of health throughout migration and displacement transitions, including travel, arrest, and possible return, and their impact on individual health needs across the life course.

1.3. Addresses mental health and the psychosocial support needs of refugees and migrants by providing trauma-informed care and interventions sensitive to experiences of chronic hardship, traumatic events, grief, and facilitating referrals.

1.4. Supports universal access to quality health care, irrespective of the person's legal status and related legal, administrative, and financial barriers to accessing the particular vulnerabilities of children on the move.

1.5. Facilitates continuity of care by supporting the person to hold their own health information and documentation and to understand how to seek further care, recognizing the mobility of refugee and migrant populations.

Competency standard 2: Promotes the agency of refugees and migrants and individual and community levels

Behaviours

2.1. Assesses the person's health literacy and health system literacy, including identifying areas of strength and specific areas of risk.

2.2. Supports refugees and migrants to develop their health literacy and their awareness of the right to health.

2.3. Supports refugees and migrants to improve their knowledge of, and ability to navigate, the host country's health system.

2.4. Addresses language and cultural considerations when supporting people to be informed of their options for health care, make decisions about and manage their own health.

2.5. Engages with diaspora communities to promote the agency of refugees and migrants at a community level.

2.6. Identifies processes for safe and appropriate engagement with the person's family or community to facilitate the provision of health care, including when addressing barriers to support.

2.7. Recognizes the impacts of family separation on the health of refugees and migrants, including mental health impacts.

Domain 2: Communication

Competency standard 3: Engages safe and appropriate aids to meet language and communication needs of refugees and migrants

Behaviours

3.1. Recognizes the person's rights to timely, gender- and age-appropriate information, which underpin culturally sensitive care. Effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution between health workers and professionals across different sectors is needed to address the impact of non-health-related factors on the person's health.

3.2. Utilizes language and communication barriers by engaging trained individuals including interpreters and cultural mediators, as appropriate, to facilitate communication between the health worker and the person.

3.3. Uses language and communication barriers to engage persons with special needs, to provide information in an appropriate, sensitive, and age- and gender-appropriate manner.

3.4. Adapts practice to work effectively with refugees and migrants in a person-to-person relationship.

Domain 3: Collaboration

Competency standard 4: Provides social and psychological support to refugees and migrants

Behaviours

4.1. Engages with broader social and community support, including legal, education, employment, housing and other social support services as appropriate, to address the impacts of non-health-related factors on the person's health in the context of migration and displacement and to facilitate specialized care.

4.2. Engages with broader social and community support, including legal, education, employment, housing and other social support services as appropriate, to address the impacts of non-health-related factors on the person's health in the context of migration and displacement and to facilitate specialized care.

4.3. Engages effectively with government departments, non-governmental and international organizations, communities and other health workers to provide integrated and coordinated health, mental health and psychosocial support services to refugees and migrants.

Domain 4: Evidence-informed practice

Competency standard 5: Promotes evidence-informed health care for refugees and migrants

Behaviours

5.1. Engages people with evidence-informed guidelines and standards, or respond to specific health needs of refugees and migrants and planning and delivery, including mental health and psychological first aid, pain management and medication and mental health and psychological first aid.

5.2. Recognizes how the health needs of refugees and migrants intersect with those of the general population, identifying additional evidence is needed to support refugees and migrants.

5.3. Participates in the generation of evidence, where possible in the development of guidelines and standards to support refugees and migrants.

5.4. Supports the translation of evidence into practice with refugees and migrants.

Domain 5: Personal conduct

Competency standard 6: Engages in lifelong learning and reflective practice to promote the health of refugees and migrants

Behaviours

6.1. Maintains awareness of own culture, beliefs, values and biases.

6.2. Demonstrates awareness of institutional discrimination experienced by refugees and migrants, in particular its impacts on health status.

6.3. Demonstrates awareness of interactions of systems, structures and patterns of power that determine a person's position of disadvantage and impact their access to, and experience of, health care.

6.4. Addresses the impact of own culture, beliefs, values and biases as well as institutional discrimination on interactions in health-care settings, including continually adapting practice to respond to the needs of relevant communities.

6.5. Promotes and contributes to a culture of self-care and mutual support when providing health care in the context of migration and displacement

Behaviours

6.5.1. Engages in self-care practices to manage mental health and well-being when working in the context of migration and displacement.

6.5.2. Promotes and contributes to a supportive team environment to manage the mental health and well-being impacts of providing care to refugees and migrants.
A Whole-of-government & Whole-of-society response to address underlying structural violence including access to secure livelihood activities; anti-foreigner sentiments & xenophobia; stigma & moralizing in relation to gender identity, sexual orientation & pregnancy.

Make use of the WHO Refugee and Migrant Health Global Competency Standards for Health Workers.

Develop a National Migration & Health Task Team (N-MHTT) to improve intersectoral & multi-level action between government departments & other governance actors including civil society, international organisations, academia and business sector.

Promote universal healthcare coverage.

WHAT IS NEEDED

ADOPT A MIGRATION-AWARE APPROACH:
a whole-health system response whereby population movement is embedded as a central concern in the design of interventions, policy and research

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

SERVICE DELIVERY

FINANCING

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT & WHOLE OF SOCIETY RESPONSE
THE FIREWALL: Clear separation of roles

- Care is provided based on need, not immigration status.
- Health care practitioners pursue medical ethics, and are not coupled for immigration enforcement.
- Patient data is not shared with migration authorities without consent.
- All patients feel safe to seek health care.
- Authorities are trained to respect the firewall.
- Immigration enforcement does not interfere with access to health care.
- Safe spaces are respected.
- Health professionals' independence and patients' privacy upheld.

A Whole-of-government & Whole-of-society response to address underlying structural violence including access to secure livelihood activities; anti-foreigner sentiments & xenophobia; stigma & moralizing in relation to gender identity, sexual orientation & pregnancy.
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