

HEALTH EVIDENCE NETWORK SYNTHESIS REPORT 45

What is the evidence on the reduction of inequalities in accessibility and quality of maternal health care delivery for migrants? A review of the existing evidence in the WHO European Region

Ines Keygnaert | Olena Ivanova | Aurore Guieu | An-Sofie Van Parys | Els Leye | Kristien Roelens



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This HEN – the Health Evidence Network – synthesis report is the result of a cross-divisional effort in the Regional Office between the Migration and Health programme in the Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being and the Evidence and Information for Policy-making Unit in the Division of Information, Evidence, Research and Innovation.

The Health Evidence Network

HEN is an information service for public health decision-makers in the WHO European Region, in action since 2003 and initiated and coordinated by the WHO Regional Office for Europe under the umbrella of the European Health Information Initiative (a multipartner network coordinating all health information activities in the European Region).

HEN supports public health decision-makers to use the best available evidence in their own decision-making and aims to ensure links between evidence, health policies and improvements in public health. The HEN synthesis report series provides summaries of what is known about the policy issue, the gaps in the evidence and the areas of debate. Based on the synthesized evidence, HEN proposes policy options, not recommendations, for further consideration of policy-makers to formulate their own recommendations and policies within their national context.

The Health Evidence Network and the Migration and Health programme of the WHO Regional Office for Europe

At the fifth meeting of the WHO European Advisory Committee on Health Research (EACHR), which took place in July 2004, EACHR agreed to form a subcommittee on migration and health to review the strategic framework of the work of WHO Regional Office for Europe on migration and health, and to commission a series of HEN synthesis reports targeting policy-makers. In 2015, three HEN reports were published, tackling the challenges of three distinct migrant groups: irregular migrants, labour migrants, and refugees and asylum seekers.

In 2016, three new HEN reports are being published, aimed at synthesizing the available evidence in order to improve policy-makers' understanding of the following specific issues related to migration: maternal health, mental health and the public health implications of the different definitions available for migrants.

The various HEN reports on migration and health have been used as the evidence base for the development of the Strategy and Action Plan for Refugee and Migrant Health in the WHO European Region.

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Abstract

The number of female migrants of childbearing age is rapidly increasing, which poses specific maternal health needs. Via a systematic academic literature review and a critical interpretive synthesis of policy frameworks, this review aimed to assess interventions and policies that work to improve the accessibility and the quality of maternal health care for migrants in the WHO European Region. The review demonstrated that most migrant women face poorer maternal health outcomes than non-migrant women throughout the WHO European Region. Identified risk factors are not only linked to pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period but also to events before conception. Migrant women's access to maternal health care is jeopardized by restricted entitlement and problems with familiarity, knowledgeability, acceptability, availability and affordability. Assuring universal access to care and providing culturally sensitive care will enhance access and quality of maternal health care and eventually improve migrant maternal health.

Keywords

MATERNAL HEALTH SERVICES, TRANSIENTS AND MIGRANTS, HEALTH SERVICES
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ABBREVIATIONS

AOR	adjusted odds ratio
CI	confidence interval
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EU	European Union
HEN	Health Evidence Network
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PHAME	Public Health Aspects of Migration in Europe (programme)
SOPHIE	Evaluating the Impact of Structural Policies on Health Inequalities and their Social Determinants, and Fostering Change (project)
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



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