

MIGRATION AND HEALTH FROM A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

Shereen Fathima.S and Keerthiga.M

III B.Com (General),

Dr. MGR Janaki College of Arts And Science For Women, Chennai

ABSTRACT

Human migration is emerging as a significant issue of our era and is increasingly recognized as a global public health concern. Historically, migration has been linked to the spread of diseases and health risks, particularly during outbreaks that transcend international boundaries. There is growing exploration into the social, political, and economic factors contributing to disease transmission, as well as their intricate connections with migration processes, legal status, and the integration of migrants into their destination communities. Additionally, attention is being paid to the impact of migration on the places migrants originate from.

Migration within or over borders remains a main feature in human history and is a major livelihood policy. While the well-off migrate with good opportunities for advanced development within or over the nations, the poor migrate in seeking of securing primary livelihoods. Securing health and acquiring healthcare is one of the Main challenges for poor migrants. While infectious diseases and occupational injuries are usual, labor migrants are at risk of spreading non-communicable diseases. The current COVID-19 situation exposed the terrible need of migrants for moving forward with numerous economic activities.

KEYWORDS: *migration, health, disease*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, migration and displacement have been ongoing and fluid phenomena. From ancient times to the present day, individuals have been compelled to migrate to escape poverty, natural calamities, conflict, oppressive regimes, and to seek improved prospects for themselves and their loved ones. These flows have very much benefited the universe, leading to cultural, societal, and intellectual advances. Still, the process and context of migration and displacement may have a negative influence on both migrants and communities. This can happen when their particular health needs are not yet met or when the situation of their movement acts as an unfavorable determinant for their health.



Human migration is progressively in magnitude and scope. Most of the migrants arriving in high-income countries begin from countries with a high spread of infectious diseases. The risk and cause of infectious diseases are not equally distributed among migrant groups and vary with the migration stage.

Human mobility has been connected with the spread of infectious diseases across continents for centuries due to exploration, conquest, commerce, international travel, and migration. The number of migrants has tripled since the 1970s; there were 258 million migrants in 2017. The risk and burden of infectious diseases vary widely among migrants because of a complex interaction of risk factors for exposure and variable detection that change over time.

IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON HEALTH

Health encompasses more than just the absence of illness; it represents a state of holistic well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and social aspects. Recognized as a fundamental human right, health is crucial for sustainable development. For migrants, maintaining good health is essential for their ability to work, be productive, and contribute to the social and economic progress of both their host and home communities.

Migration exposes individuals to conditions that can affect both their physical and mental health. The circumstances surrounding the migration experience can increase migrants' susceptibility to adverse health effects, particularly among those who relocate for low-skilled employment or due to displacement caused by disasters or conflicts. The health consequences of migration are influenced by a range of factors and can evolve over time. Furthermore, migration encompasses broader

considerations beyond economic and social policies, including human rights, equity, development goals, and societal norms.



The intersection of migration and health underscores the complex array of factors influencing migrants' well-being. These factors, known as social determinants of health, encompass various levels, ranging from broader socioeconomic, legal, cultural, and environmental contexts to individual lifestyle choices, age, and behavior. Migration itself is recognized as a social determinant of health due to its potential impact on health outcomes. Disparities in disease prevalence, health risks, and access to interventions and treatments may arise between migrant and host populations, highlighting the need to address inequalities in healthcare provision and treatment outcomes.

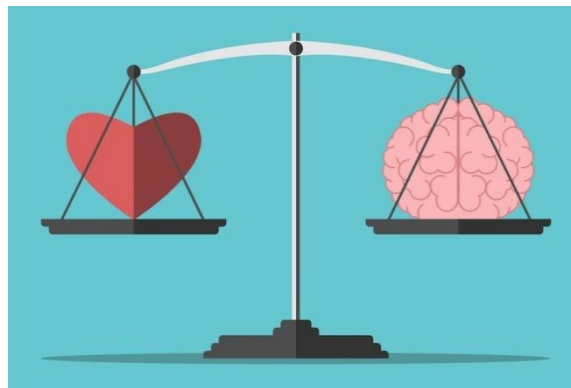
CURRENT MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT SITUATION AND TRENDS

In 2020, global migration reached significant levels, with approximately 1 billion migrants worldwide, according to reports. Among them, 281 million were categorized as international migrants, representing approximately 3.6% of the global population. Internal migration, which encompassed about 763 million individuals, showed a discernible upward trajectory during this period. According to the International Organization for Migration, the majority (65%) of international migrants, including both displaced persons and economic migrants, were individuals seeking employment opportunities. This demographic tends to consist of a youthful and productive population, with an average age estimated at 39 years, and approximately 15% under the age of 20. Women comprise 48% of the global migrant population, with the majority actively participating in the workforce.

As of 2020, Europe and North America served as the primary hosts for the largest number of international migrants, with northern Africa and Western Asia following closely behind. Globally, the number of forcibly displaced individuals continues to rise due to ongoing conflict, humanitarian crises, and climate-related disasters. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide reached 82.4 million. Among these, refugees and asylum seekers make up approximately 12% of international migrants, with many residing in countries neighboring their country of origin.

COMMON HEALTH NEEDS OF MIGRANTS

Migrants often present unique health needs distinct from those of the host population, necessitating culturally sensitive and effective healthcare tailored to recognize the influence of migration on both physical and mental well-being. For migrant populations, obtaining healthcare can be difficult due to a variety of circumstances, including prejudice, inadequate health literacy, cultural differences, language hurdles, and restricted access to mainstream medical facilities. Given the diversity within migrant communities, their health requirements can vary significantly from those of the host population.



Many migrants come from areas that have experienced natural disasters, war, violence, environmental degradation, or economic upheaval. They frequently travel great distances and spend long periods of time without access to necessities like food, water, sanitary facilities, and other necessities. Their susceptibility to food- and water-borne ailments, as well as communicable diseases like measles, is increased by their vulnerable position. In addition, the migration journey itself puts migrants at risk for burns, hypothermia, and other noncommunicable diseases. These risks are exacerbated by restricted entrance regulations and difficulties with integration and inclusion.

Migrants frequently have poorly treated non-communicable diseases when they reach their new country because they may not have had access to quality medical treatment while traveling. Maternity care is usually the first point of contact between migrant women and the healthcare system.

Migrants are vulnerable to mental health issues resulting from stressful or traumatic experiences. Many struggle with emotions such as worry, despair, hopelessness, weariness, impatience, rage, and physical pain. They also frequently experience sleep difficulties. While most people eventually get over these upsetting symptoms, migrants may nevertheless be more susceptible than host populations to illnesses including melancholy, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Moreover, there is a close relationship between migrant health and socioeconomic variables such housing, education, income, and work.

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

Member states approved the Global Action Plan for promoting the health of refugees and migrants, which runs from 2019 to 2023, at the 2019 World Health Assembly. The goals of this all-encompassing plan are to achieve the best possible state of health for both host communities and migrant populations, as well as to promote universal health care. The organization's commitment to addressing the health needs of refugees and migrants globally is emphasized by the Global Action Plan, which is in line with the overarching objective of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023.

CONCLUSION

Migration represents a multifaceted phenomenon, and understanding the determinants of health can shed light on associated issues. The outcome of migration endeavors often correlates with improved health outcomes and enhanced access to healthcare resources, highlighting the positive influence of social determinants of health such as education, employment, income, and housing. However, these improvements are not guaranteed nor do they occur in a straightforward or immediate manner. The migration journey itself can entail phases of stress and pose risks to both mental and physical health.

Presently, public health is grappling with the complexities underlying these dynamics, particularly the high prevalence of chronic diseases among the most marginalized communities. Addressing this challenge necessitates the development of interventions, potentially community-based, that can effectively reach all segments of the population without discrimination. Additionally, targeted interventions may be required to reach "hard to reach" groups, ensuring equitable access to healthcare and health promotion efforts for all.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/12/05/health/migrant-mortality-advantage-study>
2. </index.html> <https://academic.oup.com/jtm/article/26/2/taz007/5307656>