

Socio-Ecological Factors Characterising Migrants and Refugee Youth's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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Abstract : Background: The challenges migrants and refugee youth (MRY) experience in maintaining their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) continues to be a global public health issue. Consequently, MRYP is more likely to encounter adverse SRH experiences due to limited access to and knowledge of SRH services. Using a socio-ecological framework, this study examined the MRYP's SRHR micro-level experiences to macro-levels analyses of SRH-related social systems and constructions. Methods: Eighteen focus groups were conducted using participatory action research (PAR) methodology to understand the phenomena. The focus groups included MRYP participants (ages 16-26) living in Greater Western Sydney and facilitated by youth project liaisons (YPL). The data was afterward synthesised and analysed using the thematic-synthesis method. Results: In total, 86 MRYP (male n= 25, female n= 61) MRYP (across 20 different cultural backgrounds) participated in the focus groups. The findings identified socio-ecological factors characterising MRYP SRHR, highlighting facilitators such as social media and significant barriers such as lack of access to services and socio-cultural dissonance, and the under-implementation of SRHR support and services by MRYP. Key themes from the data included traditional and institutional stigma, lack of SRH education, high reliance on social media for SRH information, anonymity, and privacy concerns. Conclusion: The data shows a limited extent to which MRYP SRHR is considered and the intergenerational understanding and stigma affecting the rights of MRYP. Therefore, these findings suggest a need for policies and practices to empower MRYP's agency through a collaborative SRHR strategy and policy design to maintain relevance in multicultural contexts.

Keywords : migrant and refugee youth, sexual health, reproductive health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, culture, agency

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