

Health Services for Women Refugees: A Quantitative Exploratory Study in Ottawa, Canada

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Abstract : Women refugees expectedly are physical, socially and mentally vulnerable due to their past traumatic experiences and their novel circumstances in their receiving countries. They may have a wide range of general, mental, and reproductive health problems, but reportedly avoid visiting health care facilities owing to complex elements. Women refugees are usually unfamiliar with their new country health system and unable to navigate it efficiently. They have limited English language skills, which makes it even harder to access culturally insensitive health services. This study examines barriers to health care for refugee women in Ottawa and offers suggestions to address these challenges. Drawing from culturally congruent health care models in Canada, the United Kingdom, and some parts of the United States, this study highlights the importance of cultivating compassion in the provision of health care for women refugees as a way of addressing some of the disparities in health care in Canada. To address the study purpose, a survey questionnaire was designed and pretested questionnaire and was administrated using SurveyMonkey, a paid source survey application, over a period of two weeks. Snowballing sampling procedures were used to recruit the participants. Data was measured using frequencies, percentages, t-test, ANOVA, and chi-square. The test of significance is set at $p < .05$. The study asked how refugees perceive their experience in accessing and navigating public health services in Ottawa; what challenges refugees face with healthcare in Canada, and, if gender is related to refugees' perceptions of the health care system they are forced to use? Results show refugees perceived their experience accessing the healthcare services in Canada to be a positive experience and the health providers to be culturally sensitive and allowing enough time listening to their complaints. The language stood tall in their barriers accessing the services due to low English proficiency and the need for interpretation services to encourage them attending the services.

Keywords : women refugee, access barriers, Ottawa, resettlement

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