

POSTER ABSTRACT

The effect of perceived discrimination on the health status of immigrant population in Spain Valencia.

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Alejandro Gil-Salmerón, Elisa Valía-Cotanda, Jorge Garcés-Ferrer

Polibienestar Research Institute, Spain

In Spain, immigration flows and diversity are one of the most important social phenomena in the 21st century, representing great challenges for public administrations and societies.

In this regard, one of the issues that concerns most is how to reduce inequalities between nationals and immigrants, in particular in terms of access and utilization of medical care services.

According to WHO, social determinants of health refer to the “different conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age” and “these circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels”. Moreover, social determinants of health help to explain health inequalities among individuals, groups/communities and nations. Health disparities between immigrant population and locals are a result of numerous factors, such as lower economic status, worse working conditions, or a poorer access to care.

When one or more members of a socially established group are being treated differently pejoratively because of his/her/their belonging to that group is defined as discrimination, being a determinant of health and health inequalities. The immigrant population is especially vulnerable to discrimination. Scientific evidence associates experiences of discrimination with worse self-perceived health, physical health, mental health problems, a higher prevalence of chronic diseases and substance use.

This research aimed i at studying the experience of discrimination in the health care system among immigrants; and ii at examining how discrimination affects immigrants' health status, by analysing the relationship between perceived discrimination, and self-related health status among immigrant groups'.

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in a non-randomized sample of 100 immigrants. The health outcomes were measured by self-perceived health-related indicators and the reported discrimination was assessed by means of a set of questions asking immigrants about their discrimination experiences in the past five years.

The preliminary results of this study show that over 60% of the participants have experienced a situation in which they felt discriminated. Men reported more discrimination due to their

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immigrant condition. Immigrants reporting discrimination also reported a significantly poorest health status than those not reporting discrimination. Moreover, mental health problems are related to discrimination due to immigrant status.

The results of this research show that immigrant population's perceived discrimination is related to worse perceived health status and mental health problems. Discrimination is a risk factor in immigrant population and could explain some health inequalities between immigrants and nationals.

This study helps to characterize the correlation of discrimination and health in an immigrant group. The reinforcement of healthcare systems towards immigrants has to be the first step to reduce migration-related inequities in health and to ensure the effective application of human rights.

Keywords: discrimination; health inequalities; immigrants; social determinants
