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Title

The Stigma Surrounding Refugee/Immigrant Population with COVID-19 status- A Scoping Review

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Systematic review, meta-analysis, or scoping review

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Because of linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, and social barriers, vulnerable population from some ethnic backgrounds have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, fear, rumors and misconception about the Coronavirus had placed these vulnerable groups on the spotlight of stigma and shaming. Understanding the stigma faced by patients and others seeking care during the pandemic could enhance public health policies to provide equitable access to care during the pandemic.

Objective: The aim of this scoping review was to review the evidence on stigma and discrimination experienced by vulnerable populations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Study Design: Scoping Review

Setting/Dataset: MEDLINE, EMBASE, PSYCHINFO, Cochrane Control Trials and SOCINDEX were searched from March 2020 to February 2022. To identify grey literature, the WHO COVID-19 database was searched, along with other relevant COVID-19 resources (e.g., CADTH COVID-19 Evidence Portal, National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools COVID-19 Rapid Evidence Reviews). The data bases were searched for studies that reported on stigma and discrimination in refugees and immigrant communities with regards to COVID-19 status. Any type of interventional, observational or qualitative studies were included. Commentary and review articles and letter to editors were excluded.

Results: The search generated 325 articles after duplicates were removed. Two independent reviewers screened titles and abstracts based on the established inclusion criteria. 126 articles were selected for full text review and 11 articles were included, majority of studies were form USA and addressed stigma in Asian population. Overall, there was significant increased incident of racism, discrimination against immigrant and people of color that contributed significantly to their anxiety and depression. The gray literature search showed the same result.

Conclusions: This scoping review showed the evidence of stigma and discrimination related to COVID-19 experienced by refugees and immigrant communities and will have implications for health professionals, public health, refugee support agencies and policy makers to implement strategies in place to safeguard vulnerable populations and reduce the impact of stress/isolation/financial challenges that these groups face.