

**Submission Id: 4081**

**Title**

*Exploring the health seeking narratives of Assyrian refugee women living with chronic pain: A qualitative study*

**Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Pain management

**Presenters**

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**Abstract**

Context: Chronic pain has been long recognised as a defining feature among the wide range of health-related problems exhibited in women belonging to refugee backgrounds. Insights into the health and socio-cultural experiences of refugee women seeking care for chronic pain may help inform practice protocols and reduce health inequalities in populations that are systematically marginalised. Objective: To explore the health-seeking narratives of Assyrian refugee women and the factors that influence their care for chronic pain in Australia. Study Design and Analysis: A qualitative study using a phenomenological perspective to understand the lived experience of Assyrian refugee women seeking care for chronic pain. Analysis involved reflexive thematic analysis based in identifying meaningful patterns and organising these into themes. Setting: The study was set in Melbourne, Victoria where recruitment began by approaching Iraqi Assyrian refugee community leaders, acting as key informants, through pre-existing partnerships with settlement services. Purposive sampling and a snowballing approach was used to identify eligible participants. Population Studied: Ten Assyrian refugee women who identified as having chronic pain. Women were aged between 19 to 85 years and had lived in Australia for four years or longer. Instrument: Semi-structured, in-depth interviews lasting between 30 to 90 minutes were conducted in English or in Arabic with an interpreter present. Outcome Measured: The lived experience of refugee women receiving care for chronic pain in Australia. Results: Overall, experiences such as their culture and family caregiver role in their homeland heavily influenced their experiences seeking healthcare in Australia. Five key themes emerged from this, including 1) Trust in health care systems 2) Accessibility to care 3) Perceptions of pain 4) Support seeking mechanisms and 5) Health knowledge. These themes played a significant role on shaping and forming their models of thought around accessing health care and living life with chronic pain. Conclusions: Refugee women arriving in Australia were confronted with social and cultural conditions and health systems that were radically different to their past experiences. This study provides rich insights into the health needs of refugee women, and highlights a need for an evidence base for better patient advocacy around chronic pain management and practice protocols to support refugee women resettling in Australia.