

EXPLORING MIGRANT HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

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BACKGROUND

- 2008 WHA passed a Resolution on the Health of Migrants stressing the importance and urgency of:
 - understanding migrant health, and
 - assuring equal health rights for migrants
- 2010 WHO Global Consultation on the Health of Migrants identified the gaps in promoting migrant health
 - Outdated approaches to migrant health
 - Lack of research on migrant health issues
- Australia in the top 15 countries with the highest proportion of migrants in the population (2010)
- Migrants make up about 27% of labour force
- Lack of research on migrant health in Australia

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Secondary determinants of health:
 - Structuralist approach – socio-economic determinants of health
 - Cultural-behavioural approach – behavioural risk-factors
- “Healthy migrant paradox” – better health observed among migrants:
 - Selectivity;
 - Under-estimation;
 - Salmon-bias effect
- Migrant health advantage diminishes over time, due to:
 - Assimilation
 - Unfavourable environment and socio-economic conditions

OBJECTIVES

- Study health disparities between different types of migrants
- Observe the change in health status of migrants over time and study the factors affecting this change.

DATA

DATA - The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) 2
– arrived in Australia in 1999-2000 – two waves of surveys

SAMPLE

- **Wave 1- 0-6 months arrival** • **Wave 2- <24 months later**
- 3124 primary applicants - 2649 primary applicants
- 1094 partners - 949 partners

METHODS

- Methods of analysis:
 - OLS, Logistic and Negative Binomial regression
- Main outcomes:
 - Mental health in the last few weeks
 - General health in the last 4 weeks
 - Emergence of health conditions since migration
 - Use of health care services in the last 4 weeks
- Main predictors:
 - Migrant visa status
 - Economic factors
 - Demographic factors
 - Social capital

RESULTS

Table 1 OLS, Logistic and Neg. bin. regression of health outcomes by migration type in wave 1 and wave 2

Variable	Mental health scale	Poor health (OR)	Medical condition (OR)	Number of doctors visits
Wave 1				
Visa-Skilled (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Visa -family	-0.806**	1.077	1.661**	0.194*
Visa -humanitarian	3.001**	10.936**	3.305**	0.786**
Migration duration <6m (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Migration duration >6m	0.457*	1.321	0.980	-0.001
Age	-0.004	1.012	1.012*	0.002
Male	-0.294	0.777	0.809	-0.303**
Divorced/Separated/Widowed (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Married	0.290	0.783	0.668*	-0.117
Single	-0.122	0.568	0.679	-0.354**
Study/at school/other (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Working	-0.281	0.894	0.892	-0.082
Looking for a job	0.050	0.889	0.775	-0.081
Household size	-0.249**	0.869†	0.963	-0.005
No income	1.011*	1.099	0.984	0.160
Income 1-8 thousand	1.342**	1.747	0.792	-0.032
Income 8-20 thousand	1.299**	1.175	1.032	-0.013
Income 2-25 thousand (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Income 35-77 thousand	-0.198	0.185	1.407	0.010
Income 78 thousand and more	-0.772	<0.001	1.204	-0.268
Very poor or no English knowledge	0.807*	1.752*	0.719†	0.148†
Number of AU visits prior to migration	0.154	1.303	0.977	0.010
Has relatives in AU	-0.091	0.605*	0.953	-0.015
Wave 2				
Visa-Skilled (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Visa -family	-0.895**	1.935	1.204	-0.001
Visa -humanitarian	3.280**	8.826**	2.339**	0.407**
Migration duration <18m (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Migration duration >18m	-0.010	0.941	1.113	0.143*
No intention to become citizen	1.328**	0.759	1.000	0.085
Age	0.021*	0.995	1.012*	-0.003
Male	-0.238	1.619†	0.884	-0.288**
Divorced/Separated/Widowed (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Married	-0.673†	0.657	0.780	-0.070
Single	-0.649	0.607	0.654	-0.193
Study/at school/other (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Working	-1.068**	0.188**	0.759	-0.589**
Looking for a job	-1.583**	0.343**	0.617*	-0.432**
Household size	-0.083	0.995	0.946	-0.031
No income	1.070*	1.442	1.244	-0.071
Income 1-8 thousand	1.129**	1.726	1.303	0.116
Income 8-20 thousand	1.203**	1.944	1.197	0.132
Income 2-25 thousand (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Income 35-77 thousand	0.611†	0.592	1.583*	-0.093
Income 78 thousand and more	0.281	<0.001	1.231	-0.060
Very poor or no English knowledge	1.990**	2.236**	1.092	0.182†
Contacted relative since migration	-0.487*	0.589*	1.038	0.069
Contacted friend since migration	0.325	1.336	1.367*	0.031
Used internet since migration	0.017	0.464*	0.788	-0.054
No neighbours (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Number of neighbours 1-4	-0.328	0.888	0.785	0.208†
Number of neighbours 5-9	-1.046*	0.917	0.940	0.170
Number of neighbours >10	-1.145*	0.580	0.815	0.097
No friends (Ref.)	--	1.000	1.000	--
Number of friends 1-4	0.047	1.873†	1.074	-0.134
Number of friends 5-9	-0.489	1.721	0.781	-0.030
Number of friends >10	-0.537	1.974	0.893	-0.233

Table 2 OLS regression of mental health improvement and decline between the two waves.

Variable	Mental health decline scale	Mental health improvement scale
Visa-Skilled (Ref.)	--	--
Visa -family	-0.162	0.363*
Visa -humanitarian	1.422**	-0.567**
Migration duration <18m (Ref.)	--	--
Migration duration >18m	-0.129	-0.067
No intention to become citizen	0.190	-0.600*
Age	0.009	-0.016**
Male	-0.089	0.202
Divorced/Separated/Widowed (Ref.)	--	--
Married	-0.365	0.028
Single	-0.301	-0.181
Study/at school/other (Ref.)	--	--
Working	-0.577*	0.229
Looking for a job	-0.698**	0.565**
Household size	0.018	<-0.001
No income	0.421	-0.371
Income 1-8 thousand	0.163	-0.353
Income 8-20 thousand	0.280	-0.224
Income 2-25 thousand (Ref.)	--	--
Income 35-77 thousand	0.030	-0.353†
Income 78 thousand and more	-0.092	-0.532†
Very poor or no English knowledge	0.798**	-0.730**
Contacted relative since migration	-0.195	0.185
Contacted friend since migration	0.241†	-0.041
Used internet since migration	0.032	0.074
No neighbours (Ref.)	--	--
Number of neighbours 1-4	-0.319	-0.091
Number of neighbours 5-9	-0.716**	0.059
Number of neighbours >10	-0.825**	0.198
No friends (Ref.)	--	--
Number of friends 1-4	0.192	0.095
Number of friends 5-9	0.055	0.236
Number of friends >10	-0.005	0.219
Mental health scale in wave 1	-0.194**	0.394**

CONCLUSIONS

- Disproportionately worse health outcomes are observed among humanitarian entrants than among skilled migrants and family visa holders both at arrival and a year later, including:
 - Worse mental health
 - Poor or very poor health
 - Long term medical condition
 - Higher need in health care
- They are more likely to report worse mental health and less likely to report better mental health than Skilled migrants.
- Better mental health is observed among Family visa holders than Skilled migrants both at arrival and a year later.
- Family visa holders are significantly more likely than Skilled migrants to report long term medical condition and more need in health care at arrival, but this difference between the two groups disappears with time.
- Family visa holders are more likely to report improved mental health than Skilled migrants.

