

Providers Perceptions of Pregnant Immigrant Women's Experiences Accessing Healthcare

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Introduction

- Immigrant populations in the US are subjected to exclusionary policies that often prevent them from accessing healthcare services.
- New immigration policies have been associated with mental health issues among the immigrant population, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Martinez, 2016).
- Immigration-related maternal stress during pregnancy is associated with increased prevalence of pre-term birth and low birth weight (Krieger et al. 2018; Novak et al. 2017).
- Thus, it is important to understand the emotional experience of pregnant immigrant women in the border region.



Objective

Explore how healthcare and social service providers view healthcare for pregnant immigrant women, and their observations of the difficulties immigrant women go through trying to access healthcare.

Methods

- Eleven social service and healthcare providers were interviewed to explore their knowledge regarding the health of immigrant women in the border region and the challenges to providing this population with support.
- The interviews were recorded and then transcribed for further examination.
- The interview transcriptions were then analyzed and broken down into salient themes such as the providers' perceptions of women's challenges and barriers to accessing care, provider challenges to providing care, and provider recommendations for policy.

Results

The Types of Providers

Pseudonym	Job Description	Type of Provider	Type of Clinic
Dani	Manages the clinic	Community Service	Health Clinic
Denisse	Conducts wellness outreach.	Community Outreach	Community Clinic
Nick	Administrates clients application processes to different services	Community Service	Community Clinic
Dan	Conducts operational day-to-day services.	Community Outreach	Health Clinic
Dana	Conducts community outreaches.	Community Outreach	Health Clinic
Megan	Manages the day-to-day healthcare services.	Community Service	Health Clinic
Judith	Advanced Practiced Nurse	Healthcare	Health Clinic
Mia	Registered Nurse	Healthcare	Health Clinic
Carol	Family Doctor	Healthcare	Health Clinic
Stacy	Nurse Midwife	Healthcare	Health Clinic
Macy	Nurse Midwife	Healthcare	Health Clinic

Perceptions of Women's challenges and Barriers to Accessing Care

Subthemes	Quotes
Structural Barriers	<p>"Sometimes these women are pregnant due to abuse. Sometimes these women do not want to continue with their pregnancy. They are denied their constitutional right to abortion, and they are forced to go through with their pregnancy, because ICE or the Department of Homeland Security won't allow them... to receive the procedure they want."</p> <p>"Not being able to work. Not being able to leave the country. Being vulnerable, a population that is very vulnerable to being exploited, to just being taken advantage of."</p>
Intimate Partner Violence	"Just getting basic care is a hurdle in itself because some women, say if they have an abusive spouse. The abusive spouse is not going to let them come in to get healthcare."
Awareness	<p>"It's kind of hard to navigate what you need if you don't know how to ask for it."</p> <p>"The ability to move and have income, I think it creates a lot of stress. It really gets the victim to a point where emotionally wise they can paralyze."</p> <p>"Economic wise, if you aren't able to work legally, then you have to develop income, and it's going to be limited. When you're raising on your own, two or three children, it is extremely challenging."</p>

Providers Challenges to Providing Care

Subthemes	Quotes
Accessing Healthcare	"The ability to get services, I think mostly with our undocumented population, It's extremely difficult. Medical, psychological, psychiatric, so many of our clients do have issues. A lot of them, you will see a lot of depression, anxiety, and other illnesses that come from stress, and just hardship."
Funding Concerns	"We don't have enough funds in the organization to create a healthcare for the community or for the immigrants."
Cooperation Concerns	"Obviously we aren't able to do everything here. We depend largely on our network, on our community partners. So, that's when we are trying to advocate services for clients, and when they are undocumented, that's when we hit a wall sometimes."
Fear of Immigration Climate	"Whenever President Trump started with this whole revolt... there was a drop in our productivity, our no-show rate increased. They were afraid of coming to clinic. Not precisely coming to the clinic, but just going outside of their houses."

Providers Recommendations for Policy

Subthemes	Quotes
Desired Healthcare Changes	"I wish our healthcare system would be different... it's not fair. It marginalizes a lot of people... Half of our population can't afford their health. Its nonsense to me."
Desired Immigration Law Changes	"The El Paso county is very tense. Their are a lot more people scared to ask for help. I think that everything would be much easier if there were immigration reforms. Maybe if women were given a little bit more of a leeway in terms of where they can receive services, and if they can receive services."

Discussion

- According to the interviewed providers, providers are aware of the physical and psychological struggles immigrant women go through.
- Providers perceive that immigrant women lack awareness and have many structural barriers, which makes it difficult for them to get care.
- Providers on the border main challenges are funding concerns and the immigration climate.
- Healthcare and immigration law changes need to be made to counteract the struggles immigrant women go through

Future Directions

- As a bigger project, compare providers perceptions to immigrant women's challenges, to the women's actual challenges. This will allow us to become more aware of the margin of the providers knowledge and awareness.

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