

Better migrant health services with glocal context

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Globalization is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies and governments internationally, which has strong impact on economy and global health. Globalization promotes international communication, economy, and academic development, but may also increase the spread of communicable diseases.¹ Based on the forecasts of World Tourism Organization, international tourist arrivals may reach 1.8 billion by 2030, and the increase of international travel will be accompanied by various public health challenges.² In addition, globalization is also featured by international job opportunities that attract migrant workers from different corners of the world. The increase of migrant workers further increase public health challenges to migrant workers themselves, their colleagues, and the places they are living. However, healthcare accessibility for migrant workers may not be satisfactory and therefore result in certain health inequity. Kuan et al³ published their work to explore barriers of migrant workers to healthcare services in Taiwan and proposed potential solutions. Although migrant workers are included in Taiwan's National Health Insurance services, some gaps remain to be filled, for example, the lack of professional medical interpreters and training programs, and inadequacy in the dispersal of information on existing resources to facilitate migrants searching for health services.³ With limited healthcare accessibility, migrant workers may be placed at higher risk of adverse health outcomes. Hiam et al⁴ demonstrated the patient journey of migrant workers, which suggested that unmet migrant healthcare needs not only caused adverse outcomes but also jeopardized their working capacity, daily living, and economic incomes. Like the study of Kuan et al,³ the lack of professional medical interpreters remained to be the major challenge in other countries.⁵ In addition to professional medical interpreters, a systemwide approach to create the migrant-friendly healthcare facilities has been proposed.⁵ A cross-sectional study from primary care physicians in Switzerland reported that over 90% of them may encounter language barriers in their daily practice at least once a year, up to 30% of them reported the frequency as once a week.⁶ Although language barriers encountered in Swiss primary care physicians may be

related to international travelers more than migrant workers, it highlighted the strong needs for professional medical interpretation in the modern world. A systematic review concluded that most healthcare systems were not sufficiently equipped to echo the needs of migrant workers, which made the vulnerable populations even more vulnerable.⁷ Nowadays, the migrant worker flow was not simply from developing countries to developed ones, it may go the other way around due to globalization. Hence, the healthcare needs of migrant workers may be very diversified and require special arrangements. Moreover, every country has specific health conditions that may pose greater health risks for migrants.⁸ Therefore, the migrant-friendly healthcare services should include glocal context that covers both global and local considerations. In addition to primary health care, emergency department services and mental health issues should also be addressed for migrant workers, especially when language communication becomes the barrier.⁹ To conclude, healthcare services for migrants or migrant workers are important element of the globalization that requires comprehensive solutions with glocal context to fill the existing gaps and promote well-beings of all migrants. Creating the migrant-friendly healthcare services in the current healthcare systems deserves further consideration due to the continuing growth of migrant workers.

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