

HEALTH NEEDS OF ELDERLY NEW MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Presentation by Fungai Mhlanga-
Hamilton Multicultural Services
Trust

30 April 2009

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- INTRODUCTION
- OBJECTIVES
- METHODOLOGY
- FINDINGS
 - Needs
 - Barriers to access to services
 - Challenges faced by service providers
 - Mental Health
 - Gambling
- RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVES

- To identify Health needs of elderly new Migrants and Refugees
- To investigate barriers to accessing health care
- To provide recommendations

METHODOLOGY

- Compilation of demographic report.
- Literature review to survey existing research in Hamilton , New Zealand and overseas.
- 27 Interviews (guided by questionnaires) held with key informants.
- Four focus group discussions - Somalia, Chinese, Cambodian & South African communities.

Needs

NZ HEALTH SYSTEM INFORMATION NEED

- Identified by all ethnic groups and service providers as a top priority need.
- Who provides what, where, when, for how much?
- How does one go about seeking services?
- Health , Housing , Social benefits & transport.
- Some aware of services but not how to access them.
- “send information through social networks”

NEEDS Cont.....

MEDICAL CARE NEED

- Primary care clinics prior to Gps.
- Regular free medical check ups.
- Female doctors at GPs.
- Caregiver support after surgery.
- Appropriate rest home facilities.
- Confidence with health screening.
- Shorter waiting times for surgery.
- Dental , Diabetes and hypertension treatment.



BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES

SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Lack of Family, friends & social networks
- Child care duties
- Migration of family to Australia (Chinese)
- Missing home (family, food, culture, celebrations)
- Chinese satellite television no longer available.
- Intergenerational gap.

BARRIERS cont.....

- **LANGUAGE**

- All ethnic groups affected
- Gps who don't use interpreters.
- Use of children and family members to interpret.
- Miscommunication with GP.('GP says I am Okay')
- Stigma and Mental Health interpreting (Chinese)
- Health resources for elderly mainly in English.
- Limited computer skills- internet
- Stressful English learning methodology for elderly.

Barriers cont....

- Travel to other Cities for language appropriate services (Afrikaans GP in Cambridge)
- Young English tutors
- Limited English reading skills- (Some Somalis rely on Mosque to read letters)

Transport

- own no cars , No driving skills & Relying on family.
- Unable to read bus timetables
- Lack of transport results in missed clinic appointments and limits social participation.

BARRIERS - Finance

- Refugees depend on Benefit support
- Limited money for heating (Somali).
- Dependency on home pension (South Africa)
- Resorting to gambling.
- High dental fees.

CHALLENGES- SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Compliance to Long term preventive medication.
- Funds to employ female doctors at GPs.
- Probing to get patient history.
- Limited cultural knowledge.
- Different escorts for patients.
- Misleading family interpreters (deliberate).

CHALLENGES cont....

- Gaining faith of Migrants & Refugees
- Availability of free services not known.
- Misconception of WINZ as “begging”.
- Finding appropriate providers
- Inadequate support for ethnic health workers during settlement in New Zealand.
- More use of Accident and emergency.

MENTAL HEALTH

- Late reporting, stigma and apathy
- Depression –South Africans
- Low referrals from GPs

Gambling

- Chinese elderly most affected.
- Coping with loneliness.
- Seeking respect and recognition
- “enjoy noodles & meet people”
- Casinos perceived as safe.
- Sense of shyness to seek help.

SELF TREATMENT

- Low medical check ups (eg none in 8 years)
- Use of medicines from “Home”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Health services provision**
 - Clinics for elderly new migrants & refugees at convenient location
 - Free check ups twice a year.
 - Provision of warmer housing
 - Appropriate services.
 - Greater settlement support for ethnic health staff. (informal teas, discussions , information)
- **Language and Communication**
 - Interpreters at GPs (subsidized)
 - Expand English lessons (home)
 - Use of trained interpreters.

RECOMMENDATIONS cont....

- **Information**

- Information pack on NZ Health system in appropriate languages
- Skills to cope with medical emergencies at home

- **Gambling**

- Awareness campaigns
- Promote alternative entertainment.
- Budgeting skills
- Counseling

SUMMARY

- Actual Health problems not as great an issue as factors limiting participation in Health
- These factors included barriers of language ,access to information , transport and finance.

SUMMARY CONT.....

- Similar barriers reported by health professionals in providing services, including culture, language and funding.
- These barriers result in late medical intervention, high incidence of self treatment and social problems, including significant isolation , poor mental health and gambling.

CONCLUSION

1. Addressing knowledge of NZ health system, language problems and social isolation is key to increasing access to health services by new migrants & refugees
2. Strengthening primary health care and outreach programmes improves health of elderly new migrants and refugees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Refugee services Aotearoa
- Waikato refugee forum.
- Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust
- Problem gambling foundation
- Age concern
- Older peoples mental Health- Waikato DHB
- Older persons assessment unit-Waikato DHB
- Waikato Refugee resettlement
- Citizens Advise bureau



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS CONT...

- SF Waikato (mental Health)
- Esol Home Tutors
- Nz Aids Foundation.
- Chinese Golden Age Society
- Medical officer Waikato Hospital
- Refugees reorientation Centre
- Settlement support New Zealand
- Indian Central Association



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS cont...

- SHAMA (Ethnic Women support)
- 2 General practitioners
- Celebrating Age Centre
- Indian Global Association
- Hamilton City Council
- Waikato DHB community Health
- Waikato DHB Population Health



KIA ORA

THANK YOU

