

THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF CIVIC- AND HEALTH COMMUNICATORS FOR BUILDING SEXUAL HEALTH LITERACY AMONG NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

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How a country receives and welcomes refugees and other migrants is critical to their access to societal resources, health, and well-being. Inequality in access to information about sexual health among newly arrived refugees compared to the Swedish population manifests itself, for example, in lower utilization of essential sexual and reproductive health care, lower participation in preventive activities, and poorer health outcomes. Limited access has been explained by a complex interplay of pre- and post-migration determinants, such as limited sexual health education and exposure to sexual health care in the home country, poor language skills and system navigation, low trust in health professionals and interpreters, and experiences of marginalization. This presentation discusses and contrasts the right to health and underlying determinants in the design and implementation of "culturally appropriate" interventions. We specifically explore the role of civic and health communicators/cultural mediators, operating within the realm of Swedish integration laws, in reaching newly arrived migrants with information about sexual and reproductive health. The critical analysis incorporates aspects of cultural and social integration, specifically related to the discourse on sexual and reproductive health and rights. We highlight the potential role of civic and health communicators in facilitating dialogue about sexuality, gender norms, intergenerational conflicts, and building links between societal institutions.

Keywords: migrant health, culture sensitive communication, sexual health communication

Author's biography:

Pia Svensson holds a PhD in Public Health from Lund University where she has focused her research on investigating methods for culturally sensitive health communication and its impact on access to health information and care among newly arrived refugees and other migrants in Sweden. Her research has a particular emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights and its interlinkages with social determinants of health related to a post-migration situation in Sweden.