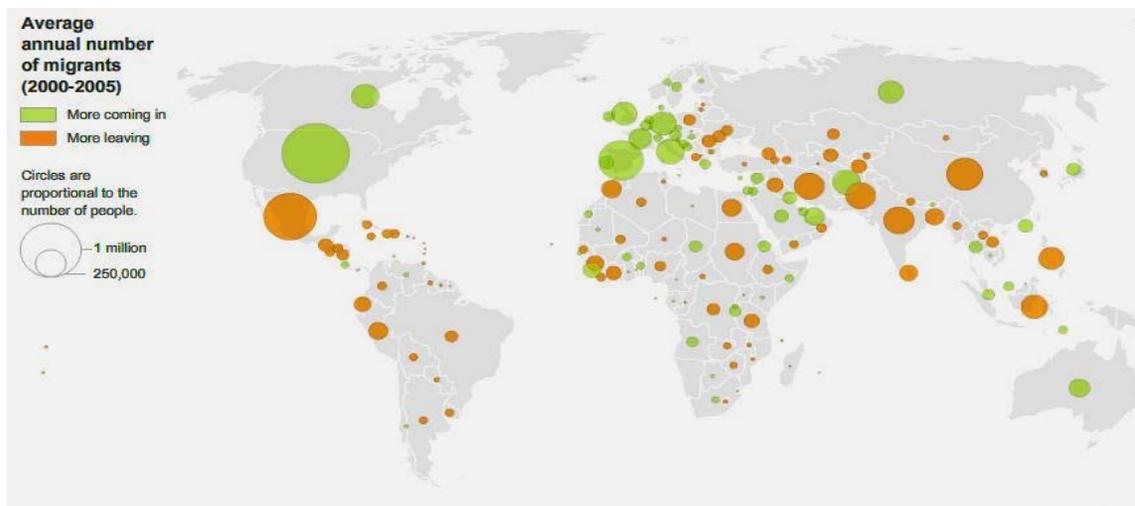


Migration and Health

International migration is transforming population health around the world. By moving between environments, migrants encounter new infectious diseases, occupational risks, social stressors and diets, all of which impact their health, as well as the health of their sending and host communities. As a uniquely global health phenomenon, research on the transnational effects of migration on health is needed to inform national and international health policy agendas.

Facts and Figures

- If all migrants in the world were taken as a country, it would have the 5th largest population in the world, with over 200 million people.
- One half of global migrants are female.
- In 2007, global remittance flows totaled \$337 billion, \$251 billion of which went to developing countries.
- 64% of Latin Americans in the United States are of Mexican origin, 40% of whom are first-generation immigrants.
- California is the most popular immigrant destination in the United States, but immigrants reside throughout the U.S.
- One in four Californians are immigrants, the highest proportion of any U.S. state.



How does migration affect health?

Life in the host country before migration: Migrants bring a “health footprint” with them, including ethnic and family susceptibility, different disease patterns, as well as varying quality of previous healthcare.

The migration process: Migration is a difficult process, regardless of the motivations behind it, and it has a variety of potential physical and psychological health impacts.

Establishment in the host country after arrival: A range of health problems may occur after migration, associated with changes in living and working environments, social stress and changes in personal behaviors. In addition, migrants are often simultaneously struggling with poor access to healthcare and limited social services.



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What areas of Health are affected by Migration?

Mental Health Problems: Depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and other mental health problems are common, resulting from family dynamics changes (partners living separately, children living with the stress of parental absence) and from behavior changes and struggles adapting to new societies.

Maternal and Child Health: Some adverse birth outcomes (pre-term, low birthweight births) increase with increased time living in the receiving country.

Infectious Diseases: Special concerns arise about infectious diseases in dynamic populations. As population mobility increases, diseases spread wider and more quickly. Migration-associated socioeconomic shifts increase the prevalence of diseases of poverty, such as tuberculosis and hepatitis. Variation in healthcare systems and cultural norms can increase the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, as well, including HIV/AIDS.

Healthcare access issues: 3.9 million households in the United States are Mexican. 37% of these households are fully insured, 36% have partial insurance and 27% have no health insurance coverage. Language and cultural barriers also can present obstacles to appropriate care.

Occupational illnesses and injuries: Mexican-American men have a 94% workforce participation rate, the highest in the United States. The majority of jobs are in industries with increased risks including agriculture, construction, transportation and domestic services. Occupational injury and fatality rates in the U.S. are greater among Latino immigrants than among non-immigrants, disability from injuries is longer and workers compensation is often absent.

Diabetes and Cardiovascular disease: Chronic stress, poor food adaptation and drastic lifestyle changes make Mexican immigrants more vulnerable to type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases than the host US population.

Organizations Addressing Migration and Health

United Nations, International Organization for Migration (IOM), <http://www.iom.int/jahia/jsp/index.jsp>

World Health Organization, Task Force on Migration,
<http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/about/taskforces/migration/en/>

Migration Policy Institute, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

International Center for Migration and Health, <http://www.icmh.ch/>

Health Initiative of the Americas <http://hia.berkeley.edu/>

UCLA Center for Health Policy and Research <http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/default.asp>

References:

1. <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/facts-and-figures/lang/en>
2. <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/activities/by-theme/migration-health>
3. http://www.icmh.ch/WebPDF/2007/DESAFIOS%20MIGRACION%20Y%20SALUD_1505_SP.pdf
4. http://hdr.undp.org/es/informes/nationalreports/americalatinacaribe/mexico/Resumen_ejecutivo_2007.pdf
5. <http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/about/taskforces/migration/en/>



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