Preface

Sabina Ličen

University of Primorska

sabina.licen@fvz.upr.si

Today, migration is a global reality. People leave their homelands for various reasons such as poverty and low incomes, high unemployment, persecution and poor respect of human rights, internal conflict and war, etc. In recent times, our region and the area of neighbouring Italy have seen a growing number of migrant women migrate from their own country for reasons to do with reproductive health or birth. In fact, for many migrant women, issues associated with insufficient or poor sexual and reproductive health in their countries can lead to worse perinatal outcomes than those experienced by women generally. Moreover, migrant women in developed countries often experience more complicated pregnancy outcomes and less women are able to access preventive gynaecology services. The latter may be due to poor cultural competence knowledge among health professionals or other barriers encountered by migrant women. With a view to delivering culturally-sensitive healthcare to migrant women, the EU programme INTERREG V-A Italy–Slovenia 2014–2020 funded the project ‘Cross-Border Network for Migrant Women: Social Integration, Sexual and Reproductive Health (INTEGRA),’ led by the University of Trieste in Italy.

The project outcomes included this scientific monograph ‘Women, Migrations and Health: Ensuring Transcultural Healthcare’ which addresses various aspects of migration and women’s health like social integration, sexual and reproductive health, along with related cultural practices, and the development of cultural competencies among healthcare professionals in delivering culturally sensitive healthcare.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the main theme of the book – migrant women. Women are often heavily involved in the survival of their families and communities, but today the ‘feminisation of migration’ and ‘feminisation of survival’ processes are very evident. Observation of the sexual and reproductive health of women can provide a good indicator of the extent of integration of cultural communities by revealing women’s capacity for autonomy and self-determination, a fundamental condition for recognition of their rights and for identifying with the models and values of democratic society, as discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents data on the number of migrant

women in Slovenia which is constantly rising, and notes it will be even higher in the future whereas a comprehensive and systematic approach to migrant women's reproductive health is still missing. Chapter 4 considers the development of a sexual and reproductive health index that aims to identify at-risk individuals, or which require 'targeted' interventions. This implies the need to identify suitable indicators; namely, another of the INTEGRA project's purposes. Chapter 5 explains that immigrant women from low- and medium-income countries have a higher prevalence of HPV and thus a greater risk of cervical pre-cancer and cancer than native women also due to barriers to access to screening programmes and vaccination uptake. Moreover, Chapter 6 discusses the available evidence on the factors associated with migrant women's use of modern contraceptive methods in Slovenia. Chapter 7 addresses the factors associated with migrants' healthcare experiences in the host country. The model presented in the chapter can help increase nursing professional's awareness of the need to provide person-centred care and overcome transcultural differences. Chapter 8 describes migrant women's social integration in terms of their reproductive health relative to the healthcare system in Slovenia. Chapter 9 outlines a qualitative content analysis approach applied to a maternity hospital in Slovenia. The analysis highlights two themes: the experiences, expectations and barriers of a different healthcare system; and the impact of culturally-based beliefs on women's reproductive health. Chapter 10 presents the main obstacles related to the main language barriers that arise between migrant/refugee patients and healthcare personnel in the area of gynaecology and obstetrics. Chapter 11 discusses migrant women's reproductive health, with an emphasis on the perspectives of migrant women and healthcare professionals (doctors, midwives, community nurses, etc.) on existing practices, intercultural differences, access to reproductive healthcare services, etc. Chapter 12 looks at cultural competence in nursing and its impact on the quality of care for patients from culturally diverse groups. The final two chapters present the measurement of nursing students' cultural awareness in Chapter 13 and of midwifery students in Chapter 14, which shows the curriculum lacks specific information on cultural competencies.

The monograph is a great example of the forces of various health and other professionals from different countries coming together to support efforts to improve the health of migrant women. The material contained in the chapters may be helpful for healthcare and other professionals in expanding their perspectives and developing the skills and techniques they need to work effectively with migrant women in a multicultural environment. The mono-

graph is written in English with the aim of ensuring the project's ideas and results can reach a wider international audience. Abstracts in the Slovenian and Italian languages can also be found towards the end of the monograph.

I truly believe the monograph will be of interest to all health workers, academics, researchers and interested readers curious to know what has been going on in this specific field.

S. Ličen, I. Karnjuš, & M. Prosen (Eds.). (2019). *Women, migrations and health: Ensuring transcultural healthcare* (pp. 7–9).

Koper, Slovenia: University of Primorska Press.

<https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-43-6.7-9>