ISTM
Communicating about Migration Health:
Shaping the Public and Policy Discourse

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Migration Health Myths

Myths:
“Migrants are carriers of disease”
“Migrants are a burden on health systems”
“Generous social rights are a pull factor”

Number of international migrants classified by region of origin and destination, 2017

Why focus on migrant health?
1. Migrants are human beings, and have a right to health
2. Including migrants in health systems improves public health outcomes
3. Healthy migrants contribute to positive development outcomes
4. Migrants connect communities and their epidemiological profiles

Health Security- IHR

A health threat anywhere is a health threat everywhere...
The Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (2014/2015) spread from a remote village in the Forest Region of Guinea to 10 countries, across three continents, as a threat of human anxiety

Migration is a Health Determinant

The health profile of a migrant depends on the characteristics of the migration process at all stages
every migrant has a story

Migrants are perceived as costly

- Many States limit the right to health services to their citizens, migrants have fewer entitlements.
- Migrants contribute to economies and development.
- Migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits.
- Migrants WORK! (more than 70%)

Migrants send more than 500 BILLION USD home/year!! (WB-KNOMAD)

WHAT ABOUT FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND?

While international labour migration generates economic resources that contribute to left behind families, improved access to health and education, contemporary migration also comes with a high social and emotional cost, and family disintegration.

IOM, K Wickramage, Lancet

Shaping migration health policy

3 big opportunities to bring migration health to a different policy level:

- The 2030 Agenda- SDGs
- The global health policy debates
- The migration and development policy debates

Universal Health Coverage

UHC leaves no migrant behind
Migrants are drivers of development

Mainstreaming migrant health

- Migration and migrants should be part of the global development and health debate
- Health of migrants should be part of the global migration and development debate

WHO Executive Board decision, Jan 2017
Framework of priorities: WHA 2017
Situation analyses: WHA 2018
Global Action Plan: WHA 2019
70th WHA, May 2017
The second Resolution on the health of refugees and migrants and related «Framework of priorities and guiding principles to promote the health of refugees and migrants» (included in both GCM and GCR drafts!)

Migration health in global health strategies

- UN HLM Declaration to End TB (UNGA 2018)
- UN HL meeting on Prevention and Control of NCDs (UNGA 2018)
- UHC2030 and 2019 UNGA
- International Health Regulations
- FPGH ....

Migration is....
1. Inevitable – demographics & disasters
2. Necessary – development
3. Desirable – if well-governed

“Migration is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be managed” WL Swing