Building Bridges to Cancer Prevention:
Outcomes of a cancer education and screening intervention for refugee women in the US

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Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health (MERH)
May 17, 2018
Edinburgh, Scotland
TOP US STATES FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, 2016

Number of refugees resettled

California: 7,909
Texas: 7,803
New York: 5,026
Michigan: 4,258
Ohio: 4,194
Arizona: 4,110
North Carolina: 3,342
Washington: 3,233
Pennsylvania: 3,219
Illinois: 3,125

Source: US Office of Refugee Resettlement
REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN TEXAS

2012-2017

2012: 9,759
2013: 10,729
2014: 13,785
2015: 15,169
2016: 7,803
2017: 2,825

Data Source: 2014-2016, Texas Refugee Health Program, 2017
+ Grant Periods
+ 2014-2016
+ 2017-2019

Prevention Grant
## Preventive Cancer Screenings and Vaccinations for Refugees Less Likely than US Born

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to Health Services</th>
<th>Ability to understand language (written, verbal and nonverbal) of health system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health providers who counsel on vaccination and screening</td>
<td>Few competing priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for the services</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs, education and experiences that support preventive medical care</td>
<td>Other Supports: child care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal: To expand the net of breast, cervical, and colon cancer prevention activities and clinical services to include refugee and immigrant families in Texas.
Building Bridges Model

Participant

Trauma Informed Screenings

Lay Health Educator Outreach and Education

Community Advisors & Collaboration

Health Provider Education
7 Health Educators

5 Groups
Bhutanese/Nepali
Karen, Chin
Somali
Congolese

1 language group
Arabic

13 languages
BUILDING BRIDGES PROCESS

Outreach, Consent & Enrollment
- Housing
- Houses of Worship
- Cultural Events
- Word of Mouth

Education
- Adapted from Research Tested Interventions & for each population
- 13 languages
- Small group & One-on-One Settings

Screenings & Navigation
- Appointments
- Transportation
- Interpretation
- Follow-Up
Enrolled people from 20 countries of origin

30 languages (with interpreters)

Top Four Countries of Origin:

Karen/Karenni (Burma)
Somalia
Bhutan
Democratic Republic of the Congo
PARTICIPANTS AND SCREENINGS/VACCINATIONS

683 enrolled as of May 2018

539 WOMEN

- Cervical Cancer (21 & older) (79%)
- Colon Cancer (50 & older)
- Hepatitis B (18 and older)
- Mammogram (40 & older)
- HPV Vaccination (14-26)

144 MALES

- Colon Cancer (50 & older) (21%)
- Hepatitis B (18 & older)
- HPV Vaccination (14-26)
## Characteristics of Participants, 2014 – May 2018 (n=683)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female (n=539)</th>
<th>Male (n=144)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age, years</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range (min-max)</td>
<td>18-88</td>
<td>18-77</td>
<td>19-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average / Mode Age</td>
<td>40/31</td>
<td>39 /31</td>
<td>46 /38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Insurance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Health Insurance</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(338/679)</td>
<td>(257/536)</td>
<td>(51/143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average years</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks English Well/Very Well</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(171/676)</td>
<td>(132/534)</td>
<td>(39/142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US Residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(min-max)</td>
<td>(0-28)</td>
<td>(0-28)</td>
<td>(0-28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFUGEES ARE AN UNDERSERVED US POPULATION

AT ENROLLMENT DATE

Never screened/not up to date

- 62% Cervical Pap screening in last 3 years, 21 and older
- 73% Mammogram in last 12 months, 40 and older
- 70% Hepatitis B Do not know Hepatitis B status*

Awareness

- 93% HPV VACCINE Never heard of the HPV vaccine among female participants

*All refugees screened at initial medical exam in US
ACTIVITIES

Community Advisor Meeting

Vaccination Event

Health Provider Training

Health Education Session

Scientific Presentation

Team Building
Intervention Outcomes*

Cervical Cancer Screening

63% of eligible women completed screening (180/286)

5% of results abnormal (10/180)

Trauma influenced participation

Female midwives and Ob/Gyn were essential

May 2014-February 2018
Mammogram

84% of eligible participants completed screening (138/164)

12% of results were abnormal (17/138)

“I will go back [for the mammogram] because it is important for women. I should go back even if the result is normal the first time.”
Hepatitis B

Screened 412 individuals (enrolled and not enrolled)

6% screened HBV positive (24/412) and were previously unaware of their status despite being screening at the mandatory refugee medical screening

Connection to follow-up monitoring not readily available

The educator helps with everything, helps with transportation, scheduling appointments, help with interpretation, arranging for transportation, and good explanation during classes.
HPV Vaccination

9-26 years of age

138 vaccinated or process

43% dose completion

“We didn’t know that cancer can be treated or prevented. We thought if you get cancer you always die.”
I did not know we had anything inside our bodies. I thought the babies were just under the skin. Thanks for teaching us about the body.

Cancer can spread from person to person, so we usually avoid people who have it.
CHALLENGES: RISK PERCEPTION

Good Muslims do not get cancer.

Only white people get cancer.
CHALLENGES:
CAUSES

“If you fall and injure yourself then it may cause cancer.

My husband poisoned me so that is why I have stomach pain.
Sometimes when someone has Hepatitis B, the traditional healers can use a metal stick that has been heated in fire to press three dots on the stomach to cure it.

Mammograms are painful. They stuck a needle in my chest and pulled out all my blood.
I'll look Syrian children in the face and say they can't come.

Why are we having all these people from sh**hole countries come here?  
- Trump
Building Bridges

Lessons Learned (or reinforced)

PATIENCE
FLEXIBILITY
OTHER NEEDS
SELF CARE
Dissemination of Results

Expansion to identified and unmet needs
  Maternal and child health
  Chronic diseases, nutrition
  Mental health
  Comprehensive wellness

Sustainability of Efforts
  Provider training
  Organizational change
Eva Baker, MPH, Co-Director and Program Manager
Martha Felini, PhD, Evaluator
Lan Yang, Student Biostatistician
Elvis Longanga Diese, Health Educator
Sara Onsa, Health Educator
Anab Abdi, Health Educator

Aisha Ojha, Health Educator
Hlawn Iang, Health Educator
K Paw, Health Educator
Natalie Buhigiro, Health Educator

Radhika Subedi, former Health Educator
Halimo Mudey, former Health Educator
Laurette Rudasingwa, former Health Educator
Emelda Thein, former Health Educator