CREATING SPACE FOR IMMIGRANTS TO SPEAK ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE AND ADDICTION RISKS FACING THEIR COMMUNITIES: A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

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OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENTATION

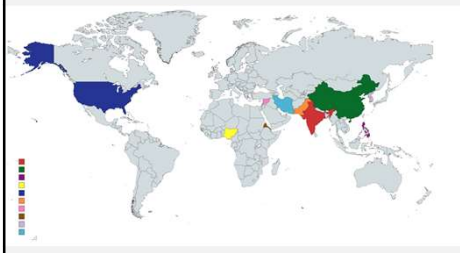
- Describe the process of community engagement and knowledge exchange with immigrant stakeholders on substance use and addiction among recent immigrants in Regina, SK
- Discuss the outcome and lessons learned from community engagement and knowledge exchange with immigrant stakeholders on substance use and addiction among recent immigrants in Regina, SK

A GROWING IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN SK

- Immigrants comprised of 11.65 % of the population in Saskatchewan (Statistics Canada, 2017)
- The Provincial Government projects a population growth of 300,000 over the next 10 years primarily driven by immigration (Government of Saskatchewan, 2017)

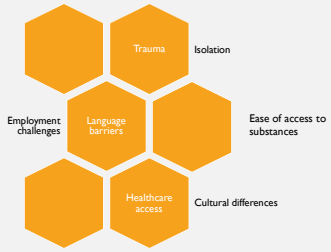
Top 10 Countries of Origin for Immigrants

Statistics Canada, 2019



- India (85,585)
- China (30,260)
- Philippines (27,815)
- Nigeria (12,595)
- United States (10,800)
- Pakistan (10,790)
- Syria (10,120)
- Eritrea (7,025)
- Korea (6,110)
- Iran (6,055)

FACTORS IMPACTING SUBSTANCE USE AMONGST IMMIGRANTS



BARRIERS FOR IMMIGRANTS IN ACCESSING HARM REDUCTION OR ADDICTIONS SERVICES

- Stigma and shame
- Cultural inaccessibility
- Betrayal of loyalty and honor
- English language proficiency
- Feasibility

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM: RECEIVING COMMUNITY INPUT

Report from providers' encounters with newcomers experiencing substance use

This report led to a community knowledge exchange event

STEPS TAKEN BY RESEARCH TEAM

Identified stakeholders and community partners → Created a proposal and applied for seed funding → Facilitated a knowledge sharing event

STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Regina Immigrant Women's Centre
- Settlement advising
- Family support
- Education & training
- Employment programs
- Community outreach

Regina Community Clinic
- Cooperative primary health care

Open-Door Society
- Immigrant settlement agency
- Interpretation services

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE EVENT

- October 2, 2021 via *Zoom*
- 22 People
  - 2 People with lived experiences
  - 3 Research team members
  - 5 Healthcare providers
  - 11 Settlement workers

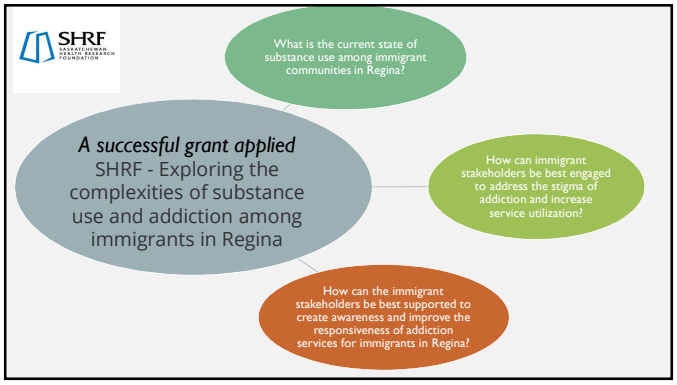
Self-introductions → Presentations → Open forum

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KNOWLEDGE SHARING EVENT?

Issues and trends
Immigrants as a heterogeneous socio-cultural group have varying risks for substance use based on socio-cultural and pre- and post-immigration experiences.
Substance use among immigrants is a family problem (men are reported to abuse alcohol more than women; youth believe alcohol and marijuana use is expected in Canada).
Lack of knowledge of substance use and addiction, its risks and impacts are a major concern
Religious and cultural expectations of substance use disorders create barriers to care and cause stigma and shame
Lack of specific programs to address substance use and addiction among immigrants

POST-KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE EVENT

- Further explore immigrant concerns
- Raise awareness
- Reduce stigma
- Harm reduction
- Culturally appropriate educational tools



EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM THE PROJECT

- Improved access to health care services for immigrants experiencing SUDs in Saskatchewan
- Amplify the voices of the immigrant population in Saskatchewan, so they can advocate for their needs
- Build capacity by empowering leaders to facilitate change within their communities

METHODOLOGY

- Community-based Participatory Action Research
  - The community of focus is involved through all steps of the research process

Identifying a problem → Planning and conception → Data collection → Sharing of findings

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

University of Saskatchewan

SHRF Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation

Regina Community Clinic 60 years

Regina Open Door Society Inc.

RIWC Regina Immigrant Women Centre Inc.

QUESTIONS