

ABSTRACT

“The most important thing when we arrive in New Zealand”: Experiences of refugee women of reproductive age with interpreters

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Keywords: refugee women, interpreters, reproductive age, hermeneutic phenomenology, lived experience

This study provides insight into the experiences of refugee women of reproductive age, who use interpreters while resettling in New Zealand. Understanding their experiences of using interpreters allows a deeper understanding for interpreting services and health professionals. It also enables more mindful and comprehensive language assistance approaches to migrant communities. Finally, refugee women will have the opportunity to voice their experiences. This research is the first of its kind in New Zealand. Women refugees are shown to be the most vulnerable refugee group, as they face many risks during their resettlement to their host country (UN Women Organisation, 2020). Refugee women often face family separation, psychosocial stress, trauma, violence, reproductive and sexual health complications while migrating (UN Women, 2020). Due to low literacy rates, they are less likely to understand or speak English, and therefore more likely to rely on interpreters to assist them with communication during the process of resettling in New Zealand. When women refugees arrive in New Zealand, they stay at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC). During their stay in the Centre, and after their resettlement to their new home, interpreters are hired to facilitate communication between refugees with numerous New Zealand services and health professionals (Ministry of Health, 2012). As this study focuses on human lived experience, it will use a qualitative approach and a methodology based on Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology, to explore the lived experiences of refugee women and uncover their meaning through an interpretive analysis (Van Manen, 2016). 15-20 participants will be recruited during the first one to five years of resettlement in New Zealand and interviewed face to face or via Zoom when Covid-19 restrictions apply. Ultimately the intention of this study is to improve the experiences of refugee women as they settle into New Zealand life and into their new homes.

References

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