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Fertility control into the hands of women
9-10 September 2022, Riga, Latvia

Abortion care for refugee and migrant women

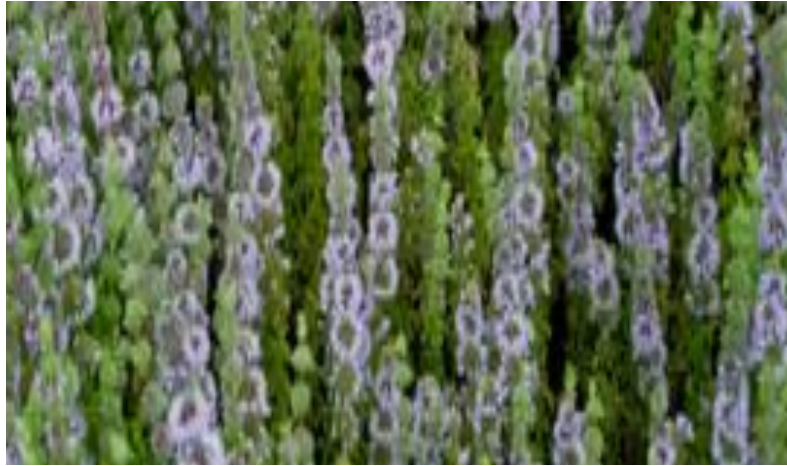
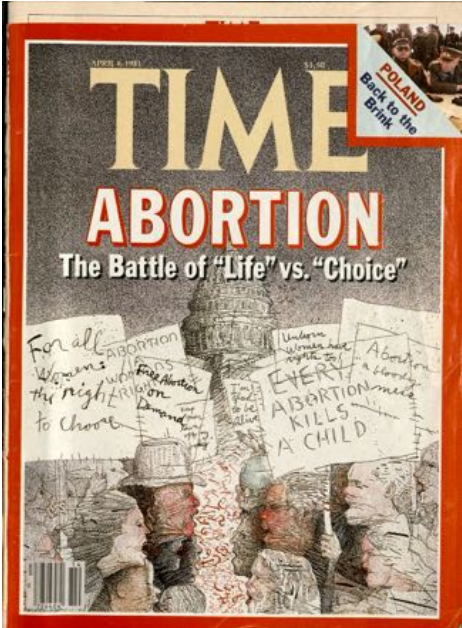
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Berna Dilbaz

Obs & Gynae
Turkiye

14th FIAPAC Conference

Abortion: a dilemma



Autonomy of woman

Access to abortion is a reproductive right

Abortion for social, medical reasons and rape

Abortion for medical reasons and rape victims

Abortion for rape victims

Abortion is completely banned

Abortion on demand 34%, abortion allowed in 98% of countries in order to save a woman's life. Save physical (72%) or mental health (69%), for rape or incest victims (61%), fetal impairment (61%)*

Gestational age
Health Professional licensed to perform
Health Facility
Partner's Consent
Law, regulations, practice
Abortion provided to the extend of the law

Accepted as a murderous act
Criminalized

*UN, World Population Policies 2017

Autonomy of woman

Asylum seeker, Refugee, Registered Immigrant
Unregistered, Undocumented Immigrant

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Year legalized	Countries	Country per year	Cumulative countries
1955	(Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus Estonia Georgia Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Latvia Lithuania Moldova Russia Tajikistan Turkmenistan Ukraine Uzbekistan as part of the Soviet Union)	15	15
1965	Cuba	1	16
1973	Denmark Tunisia ^[12] United States ^{[b][c]}	3	19
1974	Singapore Sweden	2	21
1975	Austria France ^[d] Vietnam ^[b]	3	24
1977	(Bosnia and Herzegovina Croatia Montenegro North Macedonia Serbia Slovenia as part of Yugoslavia)	6	30
1978	Italy Luxembourg	2	32
1979	Norway ^{[e][f]}	1	33
1980	China ^{[15][g][h][i]}	1	34
1983	Turkey	1	35
1984	Netherlands ^[j]	1	36
1986	Cape Verde Greece	2	38
1987	(Czech Republic Slovakia as part of Czechoslovakia) ^[k]	2	40
1988	Canada	1	41
1989	Mongolia ^[22]	1	42
1990	Belgium Bulgaria Romania	3	45
1992	Germany ^[l]	1	46
1995	Guyana	1	47
1996	Albania ^[m]	1	48
1997	Cambodia South Africa	2	50
2002	Nepal Switzerland	2	52
2007	Portugal	1	53
2010	Spain	1	54
2012	São Tomé and Príncipe ^[24] Uruguay	2	56
2015	Mozambique ^[n]	1	57
2018	Cyprus	1	58
2019	Iceland Ireland ^[o]	2	60
2020	New Zealand	1	61
2021	Argentina ^[p] South Korea Thailand	3	64
2022	Colombia	1	65

Prohibited
Altogether



To Save the
Woman's Life



To Preserve
Health



Broad Social or Economic
Grounds



On Request (Gestational
Limits Vary)



41%
Of women of
reproductive age still live
in countries with
restrictive abortion laws.



Definitions:

- **Internally displaced persons:** Persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border.
- At the end of 2014, it was estimated there were 38.2 million IDPs worldwide, between 70 and 80% of all IDPs are women and children
- **The global number of international migrants reached an estimated 272 million in 2019**

Immigrant Detention:

- «An asylum-seeker is not permitted to leave at will, including, though not limited to, prisons or purpose-built detention, closed reception or holding centres or facilities” including health facilities



Types of facilities used for migration-related detention

● Administrative ● Ad Hoc ● Criminal ● Unknown

Definitions and statistics:

- **Refugee:** People who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. 1951 Refugee Convention defines refugee as :
 - “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”
- **Migrants:** Individuals who move from one country of residence to another and are free to return to their origin country at any time (International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2018))
- **Undocumented Migrants**

Refugees and people in refugee-like situations by region between 2008 and 2019

Region (UN major area)	2019	2017	2016	2015	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Asia	4,775,702	4,547,338	4,311,000	4,129,300	3,977,700	3,898,000	3,924,100	2,408,700	2,200,100	2,332,000
Africa	10,114,523	9,540,000	9,008,767	7,940,700	6,317,000	5,080,700	5,304,100	5,713,000	5,420,000	5,708,400
Europe	2,750,771	2,602,942	2,300,000	1,900,000	1,700,000	1,522,100	1,034,600	1,087,400	1,020,100	1,074,600
Latin America & the Caribbean	211,018	202,200	202,400	202,700	202,000	190,700	197,800	173,800	167,400	100,000
South America	427,000	391,907	370,204	410,400	414,000	425,000	429,000	430,100	444,000	455,200
Oceania	60,000	60,000	55,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Total	20,340,302	19,341,347	17,187,400	14,780,300	11,839,300	10,496,000	10,409,300	10,549,700	10,296,000	10,409,000

In 2019, the number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate is 21.3 million. Moreover, 5.8 million registered refugees are cared for in some 60 camps across the Middle East by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

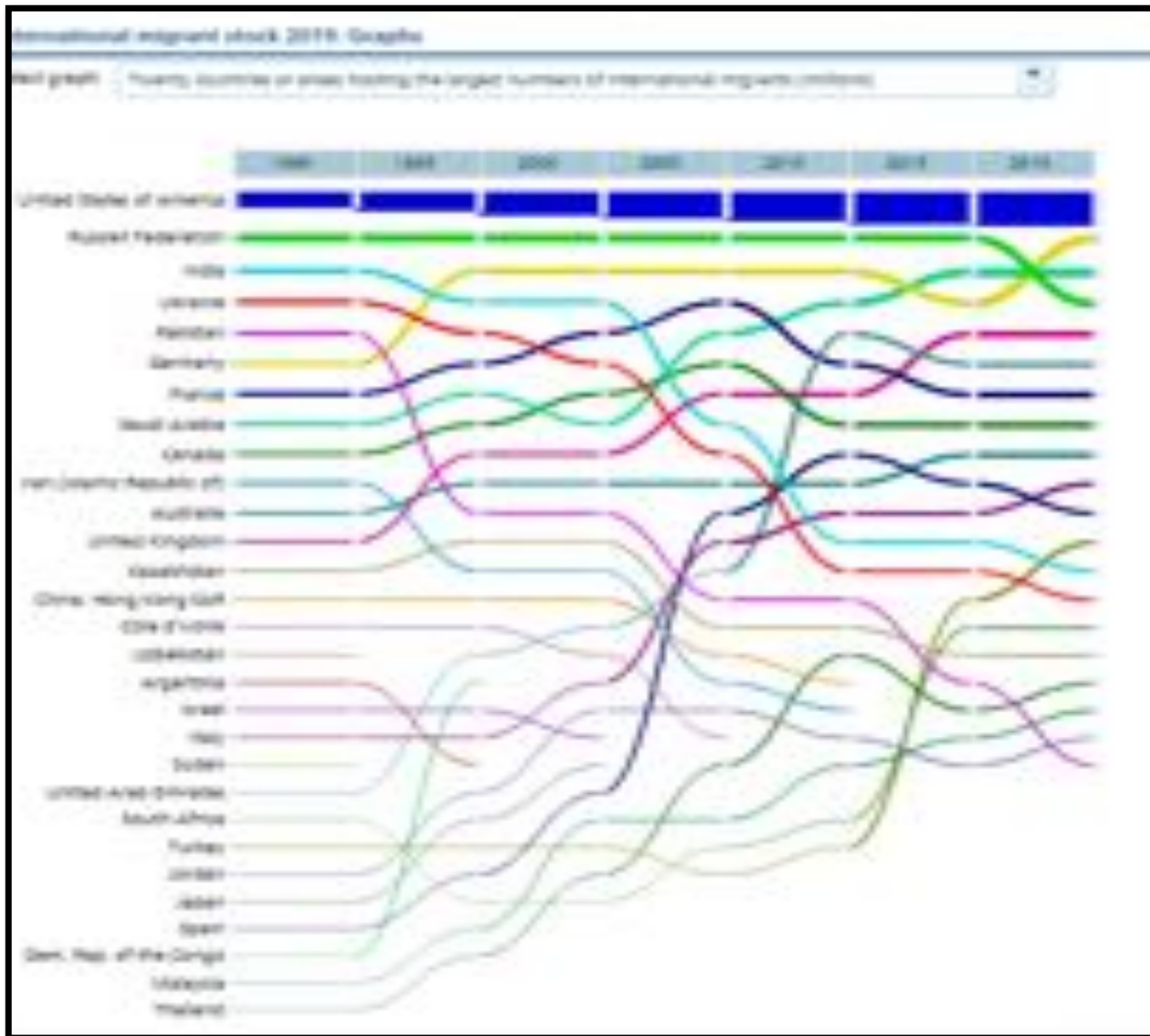
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25: Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.

Definitions.

- **Asylum Seekers:** Someone who is seeking international protection but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined

Laws for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

- The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (Article 14), which states that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries
- The 1951 [UN Refugee Convention](#) (and its 1967 Protocol), which protects refugees from being returned to countries where they risk being persecuted
- The [1990 Migrant Workers Convention](#), which protects migrants and their families
- Regional Refugee law instruments (including 1969 OAU Convention, 1984 Cartagena Declaration, Common European Asylum System and Dublin Regulation)



In 2019, 2/3 of all international migrants were living in 20 countries:
USA the largest number of international migrants (51 million (19 % of the world's total))

Germany and Saudi Arabia hosted the second and third largest numbers of migrants worldwide (13 million each)

Russian Federation (12 million)
United Kingdom (10 million)

Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. International Migrant Stock 2019,

- Over two fifths (2/5) of all international migrants worldwide in 2019 had been born in Europe (61 million) or in Central and Southern Asia (50 million)
- One-third of all international migrants originate in only ten countries
- In 2019, India was the leading country of origin of international migrants, with 17.5 million persons living abroad.
- Migrants from Mexico constituted the second largest “diaspora” (11.8 million), followed by China (10.7 million), the Russian Federation (10.5 million) and the Syrian Arab Republic (8.2 million)

* «The UN says that, as of 4 th of July, more than 5.2 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe», UNHCR (2022) estimates this figure to be 7 million



«The current German chancellor, Angela Merkel, recently made world news when she said Germany's Leitkultur (defining culture) needs to be accepted by Germany's seven million Turkish immigrants (2013)»

In 2011 the Embassy of Germany, Washington, D.C. reported that as of 2005 there were 2 million Turks who already had German citizenship

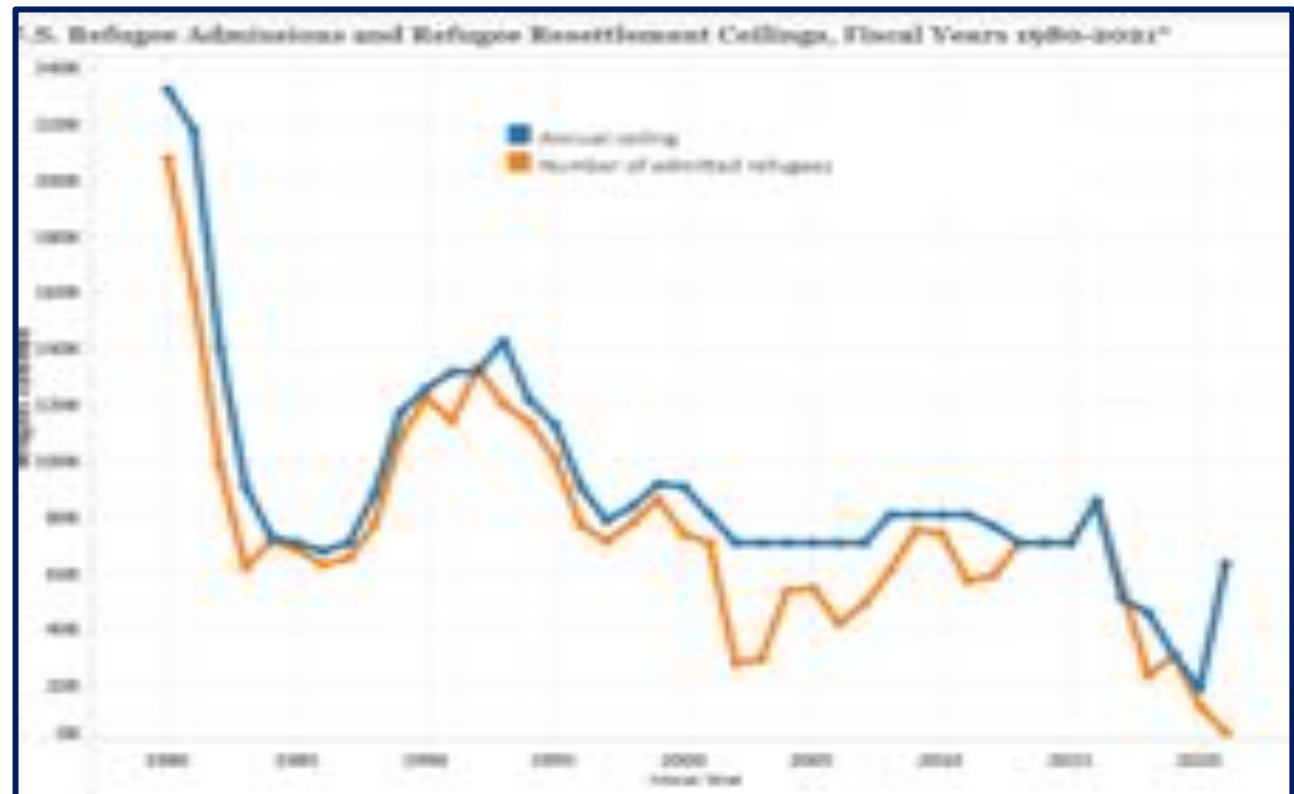
Not there yet

Country that Turks in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, consider home, % polled



Source: Foundation for Turkish Studies and Integration Research, University of Duisburg-Essen

The Economist



Refugee and Internally Displaced Women's Abortion Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices: Addressing the Lack of Research in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2020*

- According to the United Nations Population Fund, an estimated 25–50% of maternal deaths in **refugee settings** are due to complications from unsafe abortion
- Research on refugee women's abortion experiences is lacking
- 10 LMIC with the highest number of refugees are:

Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Uganda, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda

Undocumented immigrants

- A serious health problem: Nearly 6% of citizen babies born in **USA** have at least one undocumented parent (Fabi, 2022) . Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for most public health insurance systems
- 22,900-28,900 individuals live undocumented in **Denmark**, many are women of reproductive age. Undocumented migrants in Denmark who are pregnant only have legal rights to health care in emergencies (Funge, 2022)

What happens: Undocumented immigrants

- Among 236 undocumented migrant women living in **Istanbul, Türkiye**, 72% became pregnant in Turkey; 42.2% had had an unplanned pregnancy; 70.8% had received antenatal care; 10.4% had had an unplanned home birth (Mamuk, 2020)
- A study from **Finland**: Undocumented women entered prenatal care later than recommended and 71% received inadequate prenatal care. The prevalence of infectious diseases (HIV, Hepatitis B, syphilis) was significantly higher (Tasa, 2021)
- **Switzerland**: Higher prevalence rates of genital Chlamydia Trachomatis infection among undocumented immigrants who applied for termination of pregnancy (Wolf, 2008)

Undocumented Immigrants:

- Pregnant undocumented migrants living in Western societies tend to be younger, unmarried, and more likely to be employed in the domestic sector than documented migrants and permanent residents. They have less access to prenatal care and consult later in pregnancy than controls (Munro, 2013)
- The healthcare seeking behaviour of undocumented immigrants was radically distinct from refugee claimants or immigrants with permanent resident status, with undocumented immigrants being at a greater disadvantage than permanent residents and refugee claimants in Toronto, Canada (Campbell, 2014)

Undocumented Immigrants and Reproductive Health

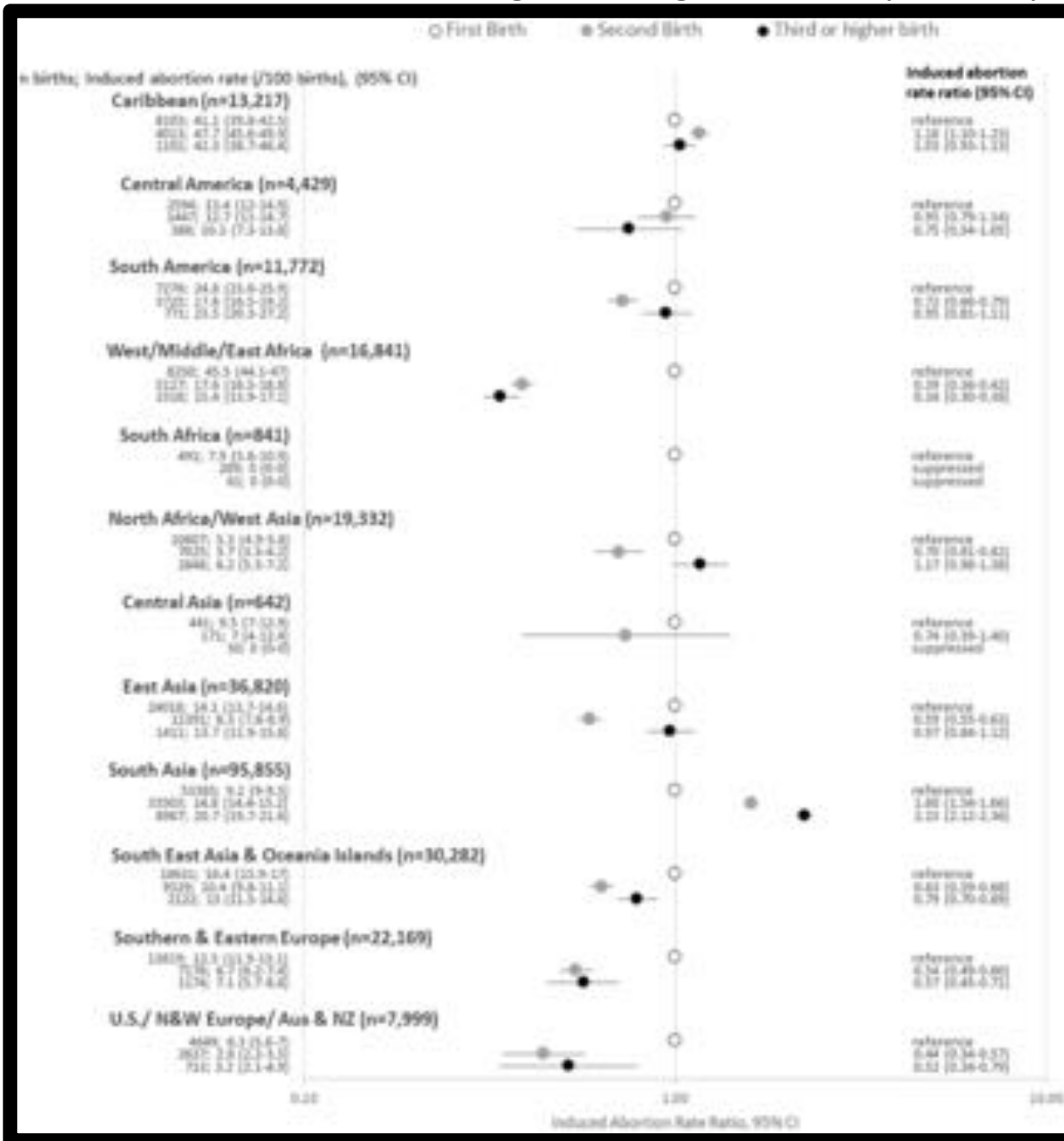
- Limited and inadequate access to perinatal care,
 - Increased the risks of physical and psychological complications during pregnancy and childbirth
 - Lack of reaching preventative measures (contraceptives, screening programmes)
- Results in increased number of unintended pregnancies and delayed prenatal care, unmet need for contraception

Policies for equal access to health care should be developed

Migrants searching for abortion; experience

- Migrant workers that fall pregnant are unable to work legally and are subject to deportation, insufficient SRH information and contraceptive access are provided, as these are seen to encourage promiscuity (*Migrant Women's Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in **Malaysia**: A Qualitative Study, 2020*)
- The majority of immigrants obtaining abortions in **USA** were in their 20s (51%), had poverty-level (50%) or near poverty-level incomes (23%), and had graduated from high school (78%). Almost half (45%) were uninsured and a similar proportion had been in the United States for less than 10 years (44%); nearly one-quarter completed their survey in Spanish (*Characteristics of Immigrants Obtaining Abortions and Comparison with U.S.-Born Individuals. J of Women's Health, 2019*)

Induced abortion according to immigrants' birthplace: a population-based cohort study

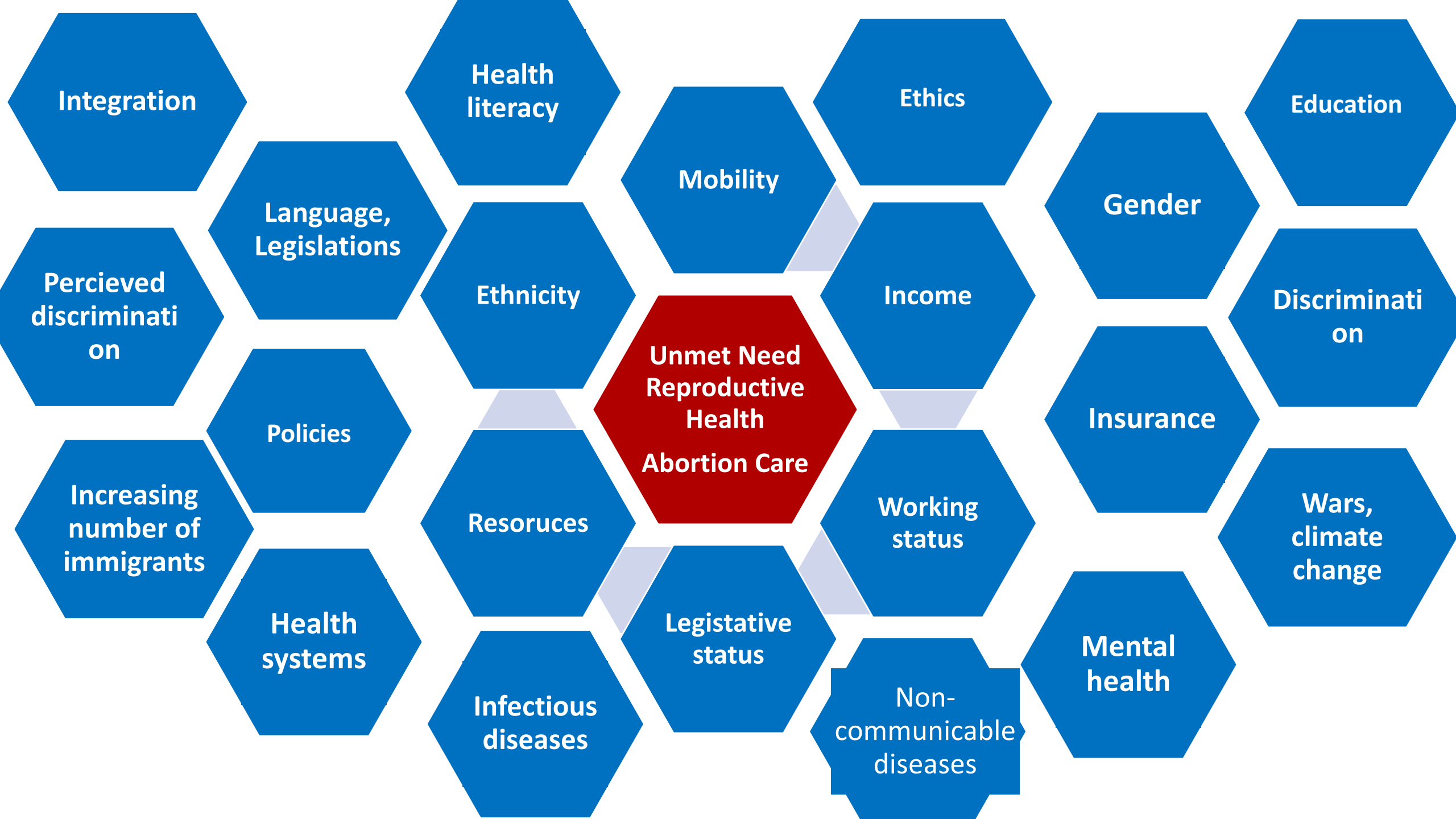


«Immigrant females born in all world regions, except Southern Africa, were 2–5 times more likely to have an induced abortion compared to females born in the United States/Northern & Western Europe/Australia & New Zealand after adjustment for sociodemographic and immigration characteristics.

Given that the majority of abortions result from unintended pregnancies, our findings suggest **unmet need for contraception** varies considerably by region of birth among immigrants in Ontario»

Barriers to Accessing Abortion Services

- Language, education, religion
- Immigration status (documented, undocumented, detention camp)
- Fear of authorities
- Difficulty in gaining access to pharmaceuticals and contraceptives
- Lack of knowledge about the conventional healthcare facilities and the legislation
- Accompanying mental and physical health problems (trauma, depression, chronic stress, family separation and stress-related physical illnesses)
- Unmet health needs related to different practices, policies and/or insurance systems



Integration

Health literacy

Ethics

Education

Mobility

Gender

Language, Legislations

Ethnicity

Income

Discrimination

Perceived discrimination

Unmet Need
Reproductive
Health
Abortion Care

Insurance

Policies

Working status

Wars, climate change

Increasing number of immigrants

Resoruces

Legistative status

Mental health

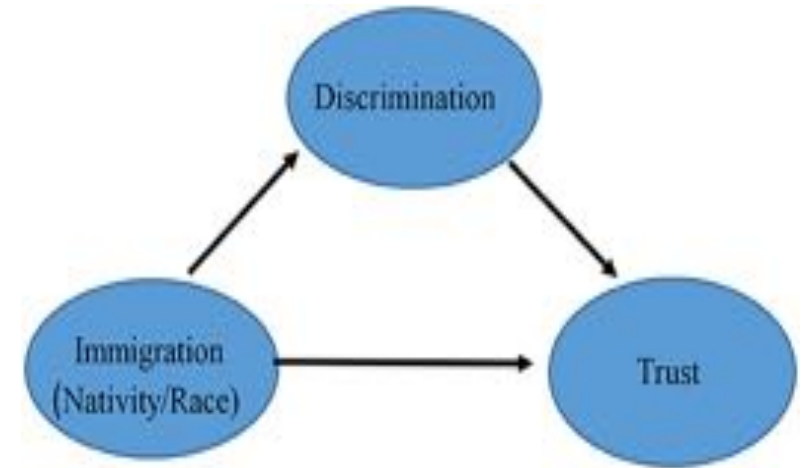
Health systems

Infectious diseases

Non-communicable diseases

Barriers to Accessing Abortion Services

- Social and Economic Barriers:
- Stigma and marginalization
- Discrimination (race, immigrant status)
- Perceived discrimination
- Difficulties of adaptation to a new culture
- Immigrants' trust to the system, institutions and the politics (Wilkes, 2019)
- Lack of social integration, social isolation and poor economic status
- Anti-immigrant attitudes, Xenophobia
- Gender based approach



WHO: Addressing the health challenges in immigration detention, and alternatives to detention (2022)

«**The right to health is a fundamental right for all, including refugees and migrants.** This has been supported by the **Sustainable Development Goals, which promote leaving no one behind, with Goal 3** being health and well-being for all at all ages.

Supporting the health of refugees and migrants is essential from a public health perspective, as access to health care supports better health outcomes, is economically beneficial and reduces the late presentation of diseases»

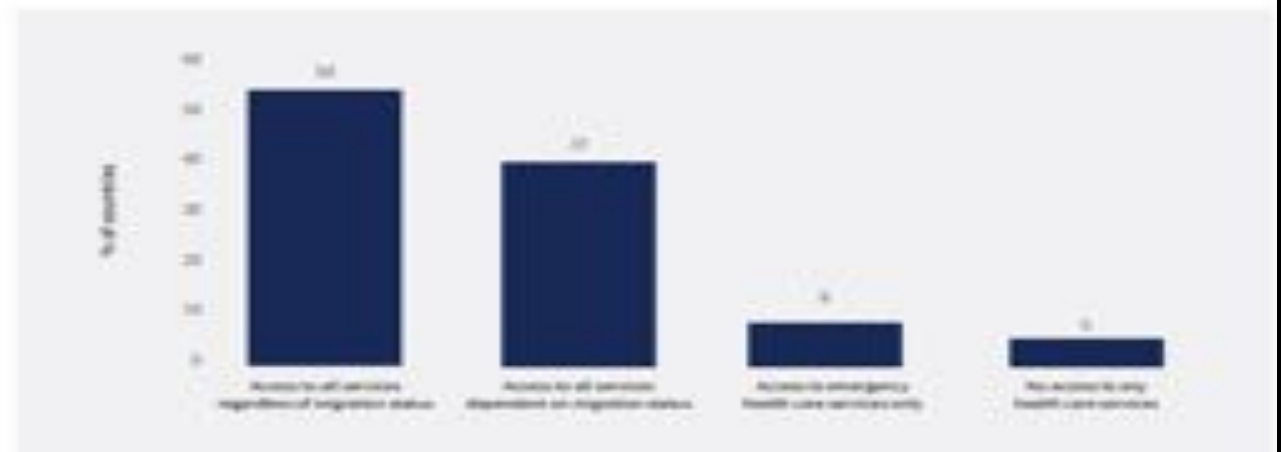
Fig. 4. Most common reasons (%) for not accessing antenatal care services reported by Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 2015–2020



1. Develop short- and long-term public health action plans that include refugees and migrants.
2. Strengthen the capacity and increase the sensitivity of health systems to meet the needs of refugees and migrants.
3. Enhance understanding of the health promotion and health needs of refugees and migrants.
4. Actively include refugees and migrants within social protection systems.
5. Strengthen health information systems by including an accountability framework and indicators.
6. Promote global research, strengthen knowledge production and build research capacity in health and migration



Fig. 6. Do refugees and migrants have the same status as citizens in accessing government health services? Information from 84 countries, 2018–2021



Reproductive Rights (WHO Guideline)

- The right to the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health
- The right to life
- The right to non-discrimination
- The right to equality
- The right to privacy
- The right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
- The right to be free from violence
- The right to decide freely and responsibly on the number, spacing, and timing of children and to have the information and means to do so
- The right to information
- The right to education
- The right to benefit from scientific progress



Everyone has a right to non-discrimination and equality in accessing SRH services



Abortion as an essential health service



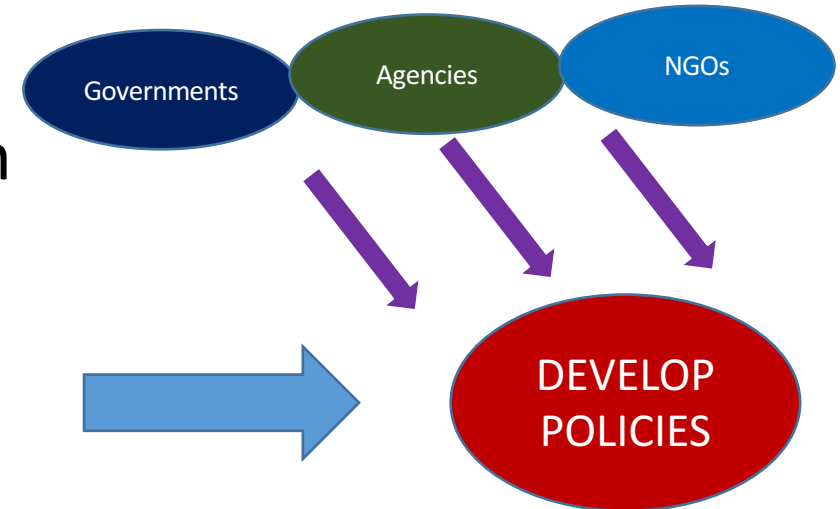
Medical Abortion, Self-Managed Abortion, Post-Abortion Contraception, and Telemedicine

Improvement of abortion access among immigrants: **Policy Makers**

Access to abortion is a critical component of sexual and reproductive health care and is parallel to the access to health care

The required steps:

- Increase immigrants' eligibility for public health
- Re-define emergency health care
- Increase their eligibility for insurance systems
- Development of health care resources
- Take a community-driven approach in order to improve SHRH
- Mobilization of immigrant networks, share knowledge about the policies, facilities, regulations and health services





The project is funded by the European Union. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all staff of the Ministry of Health.



177 Immigrant Health Centers in 29 cities with full time translators



**Health Science University, EZH Women’s Health TRH, Family Planning Clinic
Ankara, Turkiye**

	No patients at the FP Clinic	No of Syrian refugees at FP Clinic	No of Abortions	No of Abortions for Syrian patients
2019	23 993	355 (1.47%)	1254	37 (2.95%)
2020	15 546	195 (1.25%)	1030	32 (3.1%)
2021	15 048	172 (1.14%)	684	28 (4.09%)
2021 (Jan-Aug)	12 296	122 (0.99%)	510	21 (4.11%)

Brochures/Pamphlets /Translators 24/7
Translator training in SHRH, training of the migrated doctors

Support and
motivation



Refugee and migrant health: Global Competency Standards for health workers

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