

Settlement Stress and Health Needs of Migrant Women from the People's Republic of
China in Brisbane

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Abstract

The late 1980s saw the onset of a rapid expansion of Chinese immigration into Australia. While this influx of Chinese migrants has produced a proliferation of research on the more affluent migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, studies on migrants especially women from the People's Republic of China (PRC) have remained few and far between. Among those few studies on PRC-born migrant women, all of them identified settlement stress and its health implications as a major concern among PRC-born migrant, yet there has been little concerted effort on why this is the case, particularly in the area of health needs and solutions. Considering the increasing presence of PRC-born migrant women in Australia, there is a clear need for a comprehensive in-depth investigation into their settlement stress, to address their social and health needs and to provide solutions.

This study aims to examine in-depth the PRC-born migrant women's settlement experience in Brisbane, focusing especially on their stress, social and health needs. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Since this study paid more attention to these migrant women's own life experiences, it is mainly a qualitative one, using informant interview, focus group and in-depth interviews to explore how best their stress could be alleviated. Quantitative method is based on secondary data analysis to provide a community profile of PRC-born migrant women in Brisbane and Queensland.

This study firstly draws on literature reviews to explain historical, social, cultural and gender based factors underpinning PRC-born migrant women's settlement stress and

health status. Findings reviews that settlement stress comes from social isolation and loneliness; cultural difficulties; lack of support prior to and after childbirth, as well as assistance with childcare; conflicts in both marital and familial relations; academic stress; and finally, problems in utilising public transport. Particularly, this study highlights that downward mobility; barriers to access health services; and language barriers are a major source of stress and the cause of health problems for PRC-born migrant women when settling in Brisbane. As strategies, this study adapts health promotion strategies named as empowerment framework and Ottawa Charter action framework to address the needs highlighted in this study.

Settlement stress affects health particularly mental health. Strategies provided in this study can also help migrant women from other non-English speaking countries. More significantly, this study encourages governments and service providers to pay more attention to migrant women's settlement processes in order to help them integrate into Australian society smoothly and quickly.

Statement

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Date_____

Signature_____

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