

Editor's Note

Explore Your Knowledge on Nursing and Health Care

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Oral health in the US

Three articles, “Assessing Campus Climate at a US Dental School,” “Home Dental Care Education for Refugee Background Adults in the United States,” and “Home dental care education for uninsured free clinic patients in the

United States” focus on public health issue in the US. Untreated tooth decay and gum disease are commonly found in adults [1]. Among children, untreated decayed tooth is also a major oral health issue [2]. Oral health disparities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status are also problems that would benefit from continued research and evaluation [3]. These three articles provide discussion focused on improving oral health care for underserved US populations.

Chronic non-communicable conditions

Two articles, “Decision-making process about food choices and physical activity among women of African descent: A qualitative study,” and “Prevalence and the complexities of hypertension associated with type 2 diabetes: A cross sectional study” examine issues related to chronic non-communicable conditions. Non-communicable conditions account for a large number of premature international mortalities [4]. The first article explores health education strategies to promote healthy diet and physical activity amongst African Americans. Since lifestyle issues such as physical inactivity and unhealthy diet are risk factors for non-communicable conditions, this article potentially has significant contributions to the field [4]. The second article was conducted in Pakistan. While the main focus of health care in low- and middle- income countries is still on communicable diseases and child and maternal health, more than 80% of premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases occur in low- and middle- income countries [4]. Research on non-communicable conditions in low- and middle-income countries needs to be furthered.

Maternal and child health

Rates of infant mortality and maternal deaths have dropped significantly globally [5,6]. However, there are still issues within these topics that need to be improved. Quality of care is one of the areas that could significantly benefit from improvement, especially in low- and middle- income countries [7]. The article entitled “Partograph utilization and its associated factors among obstetric care providers in Sidama zone” adds new knowledge about maternal health in Ethiopia. While the issue of infant mortality is often a problem in low- and middle- income countries, it is important to note that some developed countries, in particular the US, report poor outcomes of infant mortality despite their high GDP per

capita. The infant mortality rate per 1000 live births in the US was 5.9 in 2015 [8]. Many developed countries, however, have low infant mortality rates, which reflect their high GDP. The following high income countries had much lower infant mortality rates in the same year-Japan 2.0, France 3.0, and Denmark 3.6 [9]. This discrepancy between infant mortality in the US and other developed nations illuminates a maternal/newborn health issue within the US. The article entitled “Evaluation of a health education intervention to improve knowledge, skills, behavioral intentions, and resources associated with preventable determinants of infant mortality” explores this issue and exhibits the efforts to progress health education in order to reduce infant mortalities in the US.

Immigrant health

Immigrant health is very complex. While some studies report poor health status among immigrants, other studies found that immigrants were healthier than native-born counterparts [10]. In any case, language barriers may negatively affect health of immigrants [11]. The article entitled “Language skills and level of experience among Arabic-speaking healthcare interpreters in Denmark; an explorative study” assesses medical interpretations for assisting patients with limited language proficiency. Among immigrants, individuals with refugee background are particularly at-risk for poor health because of the difficulties associated with the resettlement processes [12]. The article, “Home dental care education for refugee background adults in the United States,” aims at developing health education programs to improve oral health of individuals with refugee background in the US.

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