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Health self-perception and access to health services among migrants: Aldo Rosano ^{FREE}

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Topic: [health services](#) , [self-perception](#)

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Background

In Italy and Spain the number of migrants has strongly increased in the last 20 years, now representing over 8% of the population.

The objective of this study is to compare health self-perception and access to health services between migrants and native people in these countries during the recent economic crisis that particularly affected vulnerable groups.

Methods

Data from the Italian and Spanish 2007 and 2011 EUSILC surveys (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) were used ($n = 40,000$ in Italy and $n = 28,000$ in Spain). Health access and self-perception were analysed in natives and migrants coming from countries with a low Human Development Index (< 0.85). The comparison of risks to have bad or very bad health self-perception and unmet need for medical examination or treatment (UNMET) because of economic reasons was carried out using a logistic model (adjusting factors: gender and age).

Results

In Italy and Spain the health status self-perception among migrants did not change significantly and the risk of perceiving a bad or very bad health status was not different from native populations. UNMET increased among migrants both in Spain (from 3 to 4%) and in Italy (from 5 to 9%), being significantly higher than natives in Italy in 2007 (OR = 2.0; 95% C.I.: 1.5–2.6) and 2012 (OR = 2.4; 95% C.I.: 2.0–3.0), in Spain only in 2007 (OR = 2.0; 95% C.I.: 1.4–2.8), since here UNMET among natives increased from 1.5 to 5.4% (2007–2012).

Conclusions

This collaborative study allowed relevant evidences about the health conditions of migrants in South European countries. The findings suggest the importance of implementing programmes to enhance access to health care in general and not only among migrants, especially during critical phases.

Key messages

- Proven that financial crises affect the access to health services among vulnerable groups, targeted measures should be adopted to avoid the lack of healthcare provision due to economic reasons

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