

Research & Advocacy Program

RESEARCH & ADVOCACY STATEMENT

5 DECEMBER 2013

MULTICULTURAL CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) leads the way in developing, contributing to and conducting influential research on behalf of and for immigrant and refugee women. All MCWH programs and activities are underpinned by a robust evidence base and led and implemented by an experienced research team.

Our research program is based on the recognition that the needs and experiences of migrant and refugee women are diverse. We recognise that research with migrant and refugee women spans many methodologies and disciplines and we aim to ensure that research addresses relevant issues of gender, diversity, culture, and language.

On the one hand, there is little comprehensive research that focuses on the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee women living in Australia. On the other hand, the implications of cultural difference is widely discussed but often misunderstood. Consequently, there is little evidence about what health care models, strategies and programs might best be implemented to improve the health outcomes of immigrant and refugee women.

MCWH research mainly involves analysis and synthesis of data and other information obtained from academic, professional, government and other sources, but it also undertakes some primary data collection and analysis.

Since 2010, MCWH has been developing a comprehensive data base with a specific focus on issues impacting on the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee women. The research database complements our multilingual resource collection as being the most comprehensive information repository on the health and wellbeing of immigrant of refugee women.

We have an ethical and collaborative research culture that aims to achieve transformative change in immigrant and refugee women's lives. Our approach to research:

- acknowledges and respects women's experiences, values, and knowledge;
- values and creates opportunities to draw on women's knowledge and wisdom;
- promotes participatory processes;
- respects and acknowledges the cultural distinctiveness of, and inter-cultural differences between, immigrant and refugee communities;
- fosters ethical and respectful relationships that affirm immigrant and refugee women's right to have different values, norms and aspirations.

We regularly consult and work with immigrant and refugee women during the research process to ensure that:

- the research is both culturally appropriate and relevant;
- opportunities are provided to develop trust and a sense of equality in the research;
- the research impacts and outcomes will be meaningful for women;
- respect for the dignity and wellbeing of participants takes precedence over the expected benefits to knowledge; and
- immigrant and refugee women will ultimately benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by, the research

Our bilingual health education team also plays a central role in working *with* women as peers in the collection and evaluation of data, and not as 'researchers' who are doing research about them.

MCWH is committed to ensuring that research findings are communicated appropriately to immigrant and refugee communities as a priority, and to all other relevant stakeholders. Our research is communicated in a variety of ways and disseminated through different channels to ensure the best possible uptake by communities, policymakers, practitioners and service providers. Research findings are communicated via:

- articles in relevant peer-reviewed journals
- our seminar series and workshops
- the WRAP monthly e-newsletter
- advocacy fact sheets
- the MCWH annual report
- letters to relevant MPs