

Being a migrant woman during disasters: A mixed-method study exploring multidimensional inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic in Milan*

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Monica Trentin, Martina Valente, Giulia Facci, Alessandro Lamberli-Castronuovo, Francesco Della Corte, Luca Ragazzoni

CRIMEDIM - Center for Research and Training in Disaster Medicine, Humanitarian Aid, and Global Health, Università del Piemonte Orientale, Novara, Italy

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INTRODUCTION

- Italy is a country prone to **natural disasters** and among those hosting the largest number of **migrants**.
- Some groups suffer worse consequences in case of **disaster** due to different conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity.
- By adopting an **intersectional lens** that combines the vulnerabilities resulting from being a **migrant** and a **woman**, we can assume that disaster outcomes for migrant women (MW) are even worse.

AIM

To investigate the impact of the most recent disaster that Italy has witnessed at the national level, the **COVID-19 pandemic**, on MW in Milan, and how this impact differs between MW and migrant men and non-MW. Two dimensions of inequalities will be investigated:

1) Access to healthcare.

2) Health needs:

- public health needs;
- health needs;
- social needs.



A MIXED-METHOD STUDY

Project period: March 2023 – February 2024



QUANTITATIVE PHASE

Analysis of data:

MW vs migrant men and non-MW;
Pre-, during-, post-pandemic (2017-2023)



Emergency Department



NGOs

Differences in rates of
ED visits, reasons for
visit, triage codes,
patients readmission
rates; number of
frequent users

Avoidable
hospitalisations

Reason for
consultation
(health-related or
non-health related)

QUALITATIVE PHASE



Semi-structured interviews with:

- Migrant women (about 20);
- Professionals and key informants (about 30).

SIGNIFICANCE

- Advancement of knowledge about the disaster experiences of MW**, whose literature is scarce, and about inequalities affecting MW in Milan, specifically their access to **primary healthcare**.
- Policy brief to inform interventions for strengthening MW **disaster preparedness**.
- The study adopts a **participatory bottom-up approach** that involves key informants and vulnerable populations, making their voices heard.
- Participation of NGOs** in research allows to better align research efforts with local needs and to communicate research findings to policy-makers.

Main references:

- **Trentin et al.** (2023). Vulnerability of migrant women during disasters: a scoping review of the literature. Int J Equity Health, 22(135). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-023-01951-1>
- WHO. Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Framework.
- Fabiani et al. (2021). Epidemiological characteristics of COVID-19 cases in non-Italian nationals notified to the Italian surveillance system. Eur J Public Health, 31(1).
- McCloskey et al. (2021). A. Setting the Agenda for Reproductive and Maternal Health in the Era of COVID-19: Lessons from a Cruel and Radical Teacher. Matern Child Health J, 25(2).

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www.linkedin.com/in/monicatrentin



monica.trentin@uniupo.it