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Article

Public Health

Health Problems of International Students in Universities/Colleges: an India Perspective

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ABSTRACT [ENGLISH/ANGLAIS]

Although migration and health are important general domains, in this review we focus mainly on international student population in India. International students in India, just like in many other countries, often face some hurdles at the expense of their studies and health. Some become ill. Sometimes no access to necessary medical services and sometimes they return to their home countries often discontinuing their studies. They face psychological, physiological and environmental challenges to mention few of the problems international students face to study abroad. Although there are evidences from various research regarding general students' population, but not much has been done on International student population. There are case studies on international student health problems some of which are climate, food, mental issue, violence against woman to mention few. This article will reveal health problems and recommendations which will enable concerned bodies to take necessary measure to provide and Improve on the available health care services and program for student.

Keywords: International students, health problems, racism, discrimination, environmental, social support, mental issues and violence

RÉSUMÉ [FRANÇAIS/FRENCH]

Bien que la migration et la santé soient des domaines généraux importants, dans cette analyse, nous nous concentrons principalement sur la population d'étudiants internationaux en Inde. Les étudiants étrangers en Inde, comme dans de nombreux autres pays, sont souvent confrontés à des obstacles au détriment de leurs études et de leur santé. Certains tombent malades. Parfois ils n'ont pas accès aux services médicaux nécessaires et parfois ils retournent dans leur pays d'origine et souvent arrêtent leurs études. Ils font face à des défis psychologiques, physiologiques et environnementaux pour ne mentionner que quelques-uns des problèmes auxquels les étudiants internationaux sont confrontés en étudiant à l'étranger. Bien qu'il existe des preuves de divers projets de recherche au sujet la population générale des étudiants, il n'en existe pas beaucoup au sujet de la population d'étudiants internationaux. Il y a des études de cas sur les problèmes de santé des étudiants internationaux dont certains sont le climat, la nourriture, problèmes mentaux, la violence contre les femmes pour mentionner quelques-uns. Cet article va révéler les problèmes et les recommandations qui permettront aux organismes concernés de prendre les mesures nécessaires pour fournir et améliorer les services et le programme en soins de santé disponibles pour les étudiants

Mots-clés: Les étudiants internationaux, les problèmes de santé, le racisme, la discrimination, environnement, soutien social, problèmes mentaux et la violence

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INTRODUCTION

There are two broad categories of migration, namely national and international migration by the United Nations report [1], it is a major area that has been in focus since its inception from 1500 according to a migration research institute universiteit Leiden. Since there are different reasons why people migrate, one of which is education for the purpose of having a better quality of life. People migrate from poor to rich country for enhanced educational opportunities outside their home country, cross country mobility. There has been an

increase in the International student market because these students has been mobile, thus a rapid increase in the industry. For leading countries, the education industry has become of huge economic value.

International student mobility is taking a progressive step, between 2000 and 2011; the number of international students has more than doubled. In the world, almost 4.5 million tertiary students are enrolled outside their country of citizenship [2]. China, India and Korean countries have the largest proportion of International student. In Asia, especially in the south, a developing

country like India, in these recent times, has her higher education system to be taking a complete transformation [2]. Australia, New Zealand, Spain, the Russian Federation and, more recently, Korea are students destination. By contrast, the share of international students in some of the most developed countries – Germany and the United States, for instance – has declined.

Many students are seeking higher education opportunities at affordable cost and many are looking up to India. There has been attraction diversity as countries increasingly benefit from student mobility [3]. It's indeed imperative that little is known about student populace, especially in the developing country like India. Furthermore international student health and consequences has been given less attention compared to developed countries.

During this study, there has been an increase in trend of students migrating from least developing to developing countries like Tanzania, Rwanda, Sudan to India, from developing to developed regions like India to UK, US[4] and vice versa, due to economic situations. Some of this student may face climate, food, water, environment, cultural challenges in host country. This has been a public health challenge according to WHO journal [5] making them susceptible according to International Labor Organization (ILO, 2005). Some are disadvantaged relative to the indigenous student population with respect to their health and often experience different changes like being home sick, psychosocial changes with little or no adequate knowledge of healthcare or social services to help them out. Since health is wealth, according to Dr S. Senne [6] the people's health is the empires wealth. Trevor referenced Frank and summarizing the slogan from the Capital perspective, inclusion of economic, social and natural capital for sustainability [7] invariably without a good health, the possibility of an excellent educational outcome or for a wealthy tomorrow may be implausible. Also it is well established that people's ability to study and learn are affected by their health and wellbeing as justified by the WHO in 1948 explanation of health as 'a complete status of physical, mental, social wellbeing of the entire body system but not merely without disease or infirmity' which means feelings of happiness, confident are part of the community and physically fit for the person. Therefore, international students may not be able to maximize their educational commitment if they are not at all healthy or as result of the health risk faced.

METHODS AND RESULTS

This research aimed at investigating the implication of international student health problems in their choice universities/colleges. Some paid and free on line services was used. There was a computer search engine through, the United Nations reports, OECD Library site, WHO Publications, Psychology journals, Health books and the McGill University library. The terms used are migration "communicable and non-communicable diseases", "international student health.

Public Health Problems Faced by International Students

The presence of student from other countries promotes cultural and international understanding hopefully to also achieve their personal dream to study, adventure, happiness and healthy body in the host country .Sincerely speaking the reality of being a foreigner, makes it hard in a complete strange environment .The place where there are no families, relative and you have to make individual, social and other types of changes on your own [8]. As WHO defined, health should be a complete state of physical, mental, social activities of the body, not at the absence of disease or infirmity. It is certain that student experience various determinants of health issues in somewhat negative way, is it as a result of being foreigner? The WHO principle states that health is a fundamental human right that should be enjoyed by all without discrimination [9]. In India, the word foreigner is used derogatively; especially when such person is an African.

Health problems associated with these students can range from non-communicable to communicable diseases. Naturally issues related with adjustment changes cannot be over looked. The communicable disease are but not limited to: Respiratory infections like, Pneumonia (acute respiratory infection), Tuberculosis. Intestinal Infections like, acute diarrhea disease, Cholera, Typhoid fever, Food poisoning. Arthropod Borne infection; Dengue syndrome, Malaria, Lymphatic filariasis. Zoonoses: Yellow fever, Rabies, Fever, Trachoma, STD. The diseases are state specific in the host country.

Also there are still emerging and re-emerging diseases which may be as a result of overcrowding, rapid population growth, Poor sanitation, inadequate public health infrastructure, and resistance to antibiotics, rapid and intense international travels [10].

The non-communicable diseases are the Cardiovascular disease like (CVD) which comprises of the diseases of the heart Coronary heart disease with risk factors like, cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, high alcohol intake, environmental stress have been associated with it. Vascular system i.e hypertension, stroke, rheumatic heart disease (RHD) has been an important problem in many developing countries. Cancer, diabetes, accidents and injury also [10]. In a review of literature on migration and health on international migrants, cardiovascular disease CVD was the leading cause of death in both industrialized country (US) and economically developing country [11] like India. Combination of risk factors might have been the reason, and this is not limited to, change in diet, Body Mass Index (BMI), smoking and alcohol behavior in the migrated area. There may be fluctuations in the pattern of morbidity/mortality rate of the migrant.

Social Aspect of Health

Lack of Social Support

In South Australian context, the determinants of health play major role when it comes to international student year abroad programmes. The determinants of health are environment social, cultural, climate to mention few; all contribute to the students' health. From findings on the health and wellbeing of International student literature review in SA, Students travelling from their home country to another country for study often face hurdles like, Environmental issues, in the South Australian context, Chinese, Indian and Malaysian students studying in Australia might have different experiences studying in Australia. It took a particular type as a result of their cultural background and these may affect their wellbeing. The evidence gathered that they lack social support system, interacting in the new environment in a language different from their own, physical and mental health issues like lack of understanding of health system, risk of self-medication, behavioral aspect of health i.e. suicide, gambling, unsafe sex and lots more, for some it is unfairness and discrimination [12]. Therefore not only do they deserve the opportunity to maximize their education and to be taken care of in the environment they find themselves as being strangers but also because they also make an important role to the economy of the migrated country.

An explorative study in the US in 2007, also found that English proficiency that's low led to discrimination and then feelings of home by international students in college when compared with the indigenous students, other

factor like race and ethnicity was not left out and this was definitely an issue regarding international students [13]. Social support in the new environment may be inevitable, could lead to discrimination if not address by the institution of learning. From a study in the US by Chavajay, he investigated the source and extent of support perceived by international students. It was noticed that there was greater socio emotional and instrumental support given them by fellow international students compared to the American students, the younger students perceived more of these support than older students [14] which of course makes it more difficult, making it frustrating when not getting the support by the older students, but the researcher could have mentioned the reason why they are not getting support, which will be indicative of the root cause of the problem thereby providing solutions.

In India as the number of foreign student is increasing, accommodation and other societal issues as a foreigner sometimes be a challenge, according to the times of India report, below are the students comments [15].

Accommodation is a major challenge. "Many house owners refused to rent me a flat because I am foreign," says Jamoie. She finally found a home with the help of an Indian friend. Understanding cultural differences also takes time. "The way to approach and address people are different. It takes time to get used to," says Neema Mbalamwezi, a 20-year-old political science student from Tanzania who is studying at MCC.

A student studying political science at the University of Madras for the past year, says she felt lost in the first few weeks because she couldn't figure out the university registration system. "It is completely different and there are many administrative procedures to complete before you can register for classes," she says. "We don't get much help from the college." Flavie Jamoie (name changed).

An Italian student at IIT-M, says, "Even if we have a referent teacher, we can't approach him easily. We have to adapt quickly by ourselves." Liberato Viruso (name changed).

"When I go out, I still feel like a stranger even though I have lived here for five years. I always have to pay more because I am a foreigner, whether it is an auto or the university fees" Mukulira says.

Table 1: This table shows resources upon which this study is based

Author	Search Engine	Topic	Publisher	Date/Page Number
Chris Nyland, Erlenawati Sawir	Google e-book	International student security	Cambridge university press, Education	10-May-2010, 514
WHO	Publications	International migration, health and human rig	publication series issues	Dec., 2006.
SAGE on behalf of Institute of RACE Relations	Sage journals	Attack on Indian students: the commerce of denial in Australia	Race class	April 2011 vol. 52 no. 471-88
Alexander Kramer, Luise Profer- Kramer , Christiane Stock & Jacques Tshiang Tshiananga	Taylor and Francis online. Journal of American College Health	Differences in Health Determinants Between International and Domestic Students at a German University		07/Aug 2010,Vol53, issue 3,2004 127-132
Lorraine Brown & Ian Jones	McGill University library	Encounters with racism and the international student experience	Routledge	
David lackland Sam	Springer link	Satisfaction with life among international student: An explorative study	Social indicator Research	March 2001, Volume 53, Issue 3, pp 315-337

Discrimination

In a study conducted amongst Turkish students studying in the United States, Duru examined whether the students faced discrimination, social connectedness and are able to adjust to their environments [16]. The research indicated that those who socialize with the US counterpart adjusted more than those who do not and subsequently having high level of social connectedness. Invariable discrimination has been and is still playing an unfavorable role in the lives of International students, but most researches didn't or should have establish the effect of perceived discrimination on international student study abroad as a societal burden. There are associations between discrimination and psychosomatic problems [17] Psychosomatic disorder like stress, depression sets in and eventually could lead to mental illness and even more negative health outcomes [18]. According to a report about satisfaction with life among international student, it was studied that culture could serve as a link to reduce discriminatory behavior and improve understanding but it was not supported, discrimination affected the student life satisfaction, however depression and other mental health issues has been the order of the day [19]. Limited understanding of

available social support service and accommodation may also be a cause.

Environmental Issue

The change in climate temperature contributes to the poor health of these students, amongst college and university students in a 2 year study, Nichol KL et. al, found that cold and influenza illness were common and this problem had effect on them in the area of academic performances like, reduction in activity, loss of college work, impaired performance and health care utilization rate was higher than it should be especially in the winter period, but if it was prevented, it would be better for the students and there would have been considerable usage of health care services provided to them[20]. Asian students usually have upper respiratory track problems reported by Greens [21].

Mental Health Issues

In the University of Tsukuba, Japan, 2012 there was an increase in the number of international students, it was thought that the rate of mental health facility will also increase and a study was conducted to evaluate, international students' mental health disorder, as part of

establishing an effective mental health care services. Based on medical records, the students' data was examined, for 5 years from, 2005, retrospectively [22]. The consultation rate of international students was lower than the home students taking into consideration greater portion of the international students were graduates. But there was an increase in the trend of visitation to the Mental Health Center.

Schizophrenia, insomnia, adjustment disorder: The students were diagnosed with schizophrenia, insomnia, adjustment disorder and majority with depression. About a quarter of International students consulted the emergency service. The most severe cases returned to their country [22] at the expense of their study. This is an issue thou the researcher suggested preparation for emergency consultation, but other public health measure should have been taken as there was no public health measure investigated in the study that the students should have taken like preventive measures and by the institution also to better understand the problem.

Stress Problems

Similarly, Hyun J et al. [23], examined the mental health needs including knowledge and counseling services, while in campus and off campus, of international students that are graduates. It was found out that almost half of the international graduate student, 44 percent, reported having stress related problem. Not only did this significantly affected their performance but also their wellbeing. Unmet health needs was an emphasis especially amongst the graduates [23] other factor like finance was not emphasized to be critical in the study, but other area needs to be considered when talking about graduate student, the undergraduates. They would probably have more issues to be dealing with these calls for an action in the area of the interest of the international students around the globe.

Paranoid

In a literature review on existing research on migration and mental health, group of foreign students hospitalized in Yugoslavia showed significantly higher rate of paranoid than the native counterparts [24], result may have been due to inability to adapt to new environment, feelings of lack of safety and extreme fear of others around them. This disorder could result to isolation, long term paranoia, causing problem to relationships and work.

Culture Shock

Student immigration is characterized by certain disorder and symptoms, may include but not limited to ,

disorientation, nostalgic depressive reaction and feelings of isolation, alienation, powerlessness, hypochondriacs and hostility [25]. A lot can add to culture shock ,the extent to which an individual "feel fit in" the community, the sense of belonging, personal interactions, friends, as well as positive and negative treatment by the host community or country at large .

Gender Inequality

The right to health is an inclusive one but what happens in a situation when these determinants of health [26] pose a threat to international students' life? There are rights to you as a foreigner but, in some community of the host country, some rights are become something else. For instance in India a female has to be very careful, according to Thomas Reuter; India is one of the world's most dangerous places not safe for women [27]. Talking about foreign student, the issue of safety of women is critical, there have been attempted rape case, teasing when walking or going by the road/street, stalking, and verbal abuse to mention few within the community. Should these issue continue, students would develop signs of disorder for example psychological disorder and other health hazards. Some may escape the incident others may be victim of circumstance [28]. Perception about being a female foreign student in India, comments below [29]:

The hardest part understands the role of women in society. "In India, you are considered less if you are a woman. It's worse if you are a foreigner as people have preconceived notions about white women ," Jamoie she is Alliance Francaise student.

Violence

There are different kinds of violence of which racism is one of such. Racism abuse is one of the factors experienced as foreigner, in an encounter with racism on international student report, out of 153 international students, almost one third experienced racism [30] which may lead to sadness, depression and disappointment to mention few. Below is a case study from the UK of international students studying there, to add to flavor this document. Most of the abuses are pejorative comments and assaults are low level, leaving the student in a state of confusion, hate, home sick, stressed, increased blood pressure and other health related risks. Case Study from the UK of international students (30)

For two days I was crying in my room. I felt like just running back to Ghana. What I realize is that they saw me not to be part of them. I don't belong with them. They didn't want to see me. They don't like my presence. (Ghanaian student)

I felt belittled, nothing. (Barbadian student)

It was upsetting, why people do that? I wanted to go home. (Japanese student)

I was walking back home when it was starting to get dark. I heard some swearing and shouting, and then at the same time I was hit by something. Then this car passed and someone threw something from the car. It was a hard object, really hard. In another case, people were shouting 'go back home'; horrible word violence. (Japanese student) (this student faced multiple incidents)

Racism leaves a strongly negative effect on their health even after leaving the place; the writer believed the implications are strategies for future solutions. These were some of their anger statements.

Am shocked, angry and disappointed in England! They should be friendly – if they were in my country I should be friendly to them! I think a lot of Chinese come here to study and they bring a lot of money to that city. They bring a lot of benefits so why would they think like that? It's strange. (Chinese student)

I paid more than them, I flew from quite far. I stopped my career, I spent a lot of money here, I can't see my friends or family. I want to study here and not have the experience of racism! I deserve better than that and I'm treated like not the right person or below them. (Korean student)

Another on racism which was all over the place in Australia by a report in 2009, was the attack on international students, the racist violent was politicized and was all over the media, not only did it affect the people concerned but also the international education market [31].

Case study of attacks, Melbourne in Australia, May/June in 2009

Few from the attacks were- 24 year old beaten and left unconscious by four men. Attack on 25 year old male student stabbed with screw driver. A 23 year old male

student was beaten up found unconscious and was bleeding. Another 20 year old was verbally abused and punched in the face. Group of six teenagers assaulted the foreign student and tried to remove his turban then tried to cut his hair [31].

You can imagine the extent of Vulnerability, social injustice, exclusion and health menace that is going on being a foreign student.

CONCLUSION

International students have been recognized as experiencing higher rates of morbidity, disability, educational neglect by discontinuing their education and return home instead of having mortality case, as a result of environment (climate), societal and behavioral risk factors. The risk factors are so related that efforts to change them will require more comprehensive approach that extends more than individuals' health to the wellness of the entire community campus. On the significance of foreign student, who are far away from home, with nobody in the new environment and of benefit to host country, their university/college can help with suggestions below:

1. Preventing psychosocial difficulties: Orientation before departure and after arrival in the institution, screening programs to help prepare students for study abroad. Physical and psychological screening should take place, those more likely to develop psychological problem should be given more intensive preparation and guidance. It is very necessary to provide students from abroad with accurate information about the culture, society and physical environment to prepare and prevent unwanted expectations.
2. One from list of Public health function is to offer Screening, often this is delegated to campus based health centers, for early detection of diseases (32), should be encouraged for student.
3. Academic staff, foreign student advisors, counselors and health professional should work closely together to help international students deal with psychosocial difficulties, sexual assault and violence [32]. If these do not happen teaching staff or counselor who do not understand their difficulties would be adding to the students' personal suffering.
4. Health education and health promotion needed by health professionals to develop and implement

effective programmes for reduction of sexually related issues as this is critical [32].

5. Creation of stronger relationships between international and local students in the educational setting, thereby helping international students to remake their cultural maps, is a key to forward move on loneliness [33].
6. International students should be encouraged to exchange their cultural values with the host society. Sensitivity and respect to cultural and beliefs and focus on good communication are of paramount significance
7. Policy recommendation: Amendable act on task force on international student on hate crime and racism.
8. Establishing a free call telephone number to provide support, information and advice to foreigner who are victims of violence, hot lines should be staffed with persons who is fluent in English and one or more local languages.
9. Encouraging and establishment of National/International student union should be established in the University/colleges by the Institutional heads where need be.
10. Holding a round table discussion of international students with the Immigration and institutional bodies where students could voice their concerns.

More future research in the area of international students' health and wellbeing in India needs to be encouraged.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

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