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# Facilitators and Barriers of Maternal and Infant Healthcare Access for Undocumented Migrants: A Systematic Review

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#### Introduction

Adequate access to healthcare in the first 1000 days of life is concurrent with lifelong well-being and should be guaranteed regardless of nationality, legal status, and social conditions. By exploring how migration status affects the social determinants of health, this review provides a nuanced understanding of the barriers and facilitators encountered by undocumented migrant women and their infants in the first 1000 days of life when accessing healthcare.

### Methods

Adhering to PRISMA guidelines and registered on PROSPERO (CRD42022328220), this review conducted a comprehensive search across PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, PsycInfo, and Scopus databases from 2000 to 2022. The selection criteria focused on studies that explored barriers and facilitators to healthcare access among undocumented migrant women and their infants during the first 1000 days of life. Forty-five articles met the inclusion criteria.

#### Results

Socio-cultura

Criminalization and Fear of Deportation: seeking healthcare avoidance due to fear of deportation, exacerbated by strict immigration laws and policies. **Complex Administrative Procedures:** complex access to healthcare services dissuades migrants from pursuing necessary medical care, resulting in delayed or

Inadequate Health Literacy: lack of understanding about available healthcare services and rights under local health

foregone healthcare.

Financial Challenges: High costs of healthcare services or health insurance deter undocumented migrants who often lack the financial resources for such expenses.

systems hampers the ability to access care.

Language and Cultural Differences: Language barriers and cultural misunderstandings between healthprofessionals and migrants compromise access and the effectiveness of received healthcare

**Dedicated Healthcare Clinics:** clinics that specifically serve undocumented migrants can improve access by providing a safe space Policy Reforms: policies that protect migrant healthcare rights facilitate better access and thus outcomes. Barriers Language Support Services: translation and interpretation

services are effective in bridging the communication gap between healthcare providers and undocumented mothers. Community Outreach Programs: Programs that engage directly with migrant communities help to build trust and inform migrants about their healthcare rights and available services.

healthier lifestyle within migrant communities also play a crucial role in improving long-term health outcomes.

Health Promotion Activities: Initiatives that promote

Ethical implications

Barriers not only affect immediate health outcomes but also pose long-term social and economic consequences. Ethical considerations emphasize the need for compassionate healthcare policies that uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals, regardless of their legal status.

## **Discussion**

Legal barriers significantly deter access to necessary healthcare services for undocumented migrants. These barriers are compounded by socio-cultural challenges, such as limited health literacy and economic hardships, restrict healthcare which further engagement. Facilitators indicate potential pathways to improve healthcare access. The results underscore importance of understanding the interplay between legal restrictions and socio-cultural barriers to devise effective strategies that address these issues holistically. By integrating ethical considerations, healthcare systems can evolve to support the well-being of all individuals, particularly the vulnerable undocumented migrant population.

# Conclusion

This systematic review highlights the critical healthcare access disparities faced by undocumented migrants in their first 1000 days of maternal and infant care. It calls for a multidisciplinary approach to reform policies and implement facilitative measures that ensure healthcare equity. The findings advocate for a shift from exclusionary practices to inclusive, compassionate healthcare provision that supports the health and dignity of undocumented migrants and their children. Pursuing universal health coverage and integrating socio-cultural support mechanisms are essential steps towards mitigating the adverse effects of current barriers improving long-term health outcomes for this marginalized group