Introduction

The health care of immigrants and the health effects of migration on sending and receiving communities have been issues of concern worldwide. Given increasing globalization it is likely that migration and the health of immigrants will become even more important. These multifaceted and complex issues demand a multidisciplinary, multilevel perspective and immigrant health can no longer be considered a niche in health care that can be outside of the interest or expertise of health care systems and health care providers. The Encyclopedia of Immigrant Health represents our effort to provide a foundational reference work for health care providers, public health professionals, advocates, agency personnel, and policymakers as they increasingly are called upon to provide optimal support for immigrants and their families.

Contributors to these volumes approach their topics from diverse disciplinary, political, and cultural viewpoints and, wherever possible, approach their subject from a biopsychosocial perspective. Many, if not most, of the contributors have direct experience in one or more domains of immigrant health, including medicine, nursing, health-related research, law, human rights, public health, health education, economics, demography, psychology, sociology, social work, religion and theology, medical anthropology, and history.

The Encyclopedia of Immigrant Health comprises two major sections. Part I consists of overview chapters that provide the reader with an in-depth examination of various dimensions of immigrant health. Rausa and Lloyd focus on global patterns of migration as well as the various factors that motivate individuals to leave their countries of origin for another locale. Loue's chapter follows, with an examination of the interplay between immigration processes and health concerns, using U.S. immigration policy as an example.

The four chapters that follow focus on dimensions of health and health care that, while relevant to all populations, are particularly salient in the context of immigrant health. Regardless of where they are coming from and where they are going to, all immigrants bring with them their understandings of health, illness, disease, healing, and cure. Health care providers and researchers may find the chapters on alternative and complementary medicine, authored by Lovell, Daneshnia and Fries, and culture-specific diagnoses, authored by Smith, Mayes and Smith, particularly useful, with their examinations of conceptualizations of illness and approaches to healing that have been endorsed by various cultures, are often relied upon by immigrants in their new environments, and have in varying degrees been adopted by residents of their new host communities. Low and Low review the multitude of factors that can affect the health of immigrants and immigrant communities. Brugge and Siqueira examine health issues associated with occupational and environmental exposures, which represent a growing concern in view of the global increase in labor migration.

Significant methodological issues may arise in the context of immigrant health research. Murphy, Allen and Sin provide a review of the various study designs that can be utilized in conducting research related to immigrant health and the advantages and challenges associated with each such approach. Both immigrant health research and the provision of health care to immigrants often present significant ethical issues. Loue reviews the many aspects that must be considered in designing a study involving immigrants and their communities. Ioan reviews the ethical issues confronting health care providers in their efforts to provide quality care to their immigrant patients.

Part II consists of encyclopedic entries arranged in alphabetical order. These entries cover a broad range of topics, including specific diseases or disorders particularly relevant to immigrant groups, culture specific health concerns, international conventions and nongovernmental organizations. Each entry provides an overview of the current understandings of the subject and its relation to immigrant health. Other entries focus on specific countries that are particularly notable as sending or receiving countries for migration or individuals who are especially noteworthy for their effort to address issues related to immigrant health. All entries are followed by a listing of suggested readings that includes references and cross-references to other topics. In many cases, suggested web-based resources are also provided.

Immigrant health is an exciting and dynamic field that challenges the researcher, the clinician, and the policymaker with its complexity, breadth, and richness. As such, participation in this field in any capacity offers the professional...
immense opportunities to be of service to others beyond one's own community and, on a personal level, for the development of knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and the enhancement of one's self-knowledge and sensitivity towards others.

Sana Loue
Martha Sajatovic
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