

# A Deceitful Welcome: A Review of Mental Health and Well-being of Internationally-Trained Female Physicians (ITFP) in Alberta

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## INTRODUCTION

- The shortage of physicians is impacting access to health care for Canadians.
- Canada accepts many ITPs, but many are unable to find (matching) roles in the current health care structure.
- Health professionals are the backbone of Canadian care system, but many face challenges affecting their own mental health.
- Addressing needs of IFTPs and the challenges faced is key to delivering better health outcomes
- \$3.5 million pledged over 5 years to Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) to develop a National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being to improve health workforce retention.
- Research gap: Mental health of female ITPs, intersecting factors and supportive responses.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the mental wellbeing of female ITPs be supported as they transition to the Canadian health care workforce?

## METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative approach
- Review of literature
- Thematic analysis
- Reflexivity

## LENS OF APPROACH

- Intersectional Feminism theory
- Anti-Racism framework



## RESULTS

- Multi-level (individual, meso, and macro) factors act as barriers and stressors for female ITPs in the Canadian setting
- The ITPs struggles e.g., unrecognized qualifications, lengthy, racist and complex accreditation process, underemployment etc. impact their mental health and wellbeing
- Loss of professional identity and status and stigma, economic and occupational anxiety pose mental health concerns.
- Lack of diverse mental wellbeing supports impacts ITPs quality of life in Alberta
- Lack of clarity regarding tracking the significant advancements to increase the number of ITPs immigrating to or in Canada
- Historical contexts and systematic discrimination create deep intersecting inequities leading to denied rights and equal opportunities for female ITPs

## CONCLUSION

- Prioritizing mental health support/s for female ITPs is crucial.
- Clear guidelines for obtaining license and becoming a practicing physician should be implemented.
- A shared understanding and meaningful engagement with ITPs is essential during transitioning into the Canadian health-care workforce.
- It is crucial to identify and eliminate elements of racism in ITP processes and procedures.
- When ITPs can put their skills and experience to work in Canada it has immense benefits.
- Transformative actions are required to achieve (gender) equity and inclusion in the health care sector in Alberta.

*"I am bent, but not broken. I am scarred, but not disfigured. I am sad, but not hopeless. I am tired, but not powerless. I am angry, but not bitter. I am depressed, but not giving up."* — Unknown

