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

RUBINA ZAMAN & AJWANG' WARRIA FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK



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

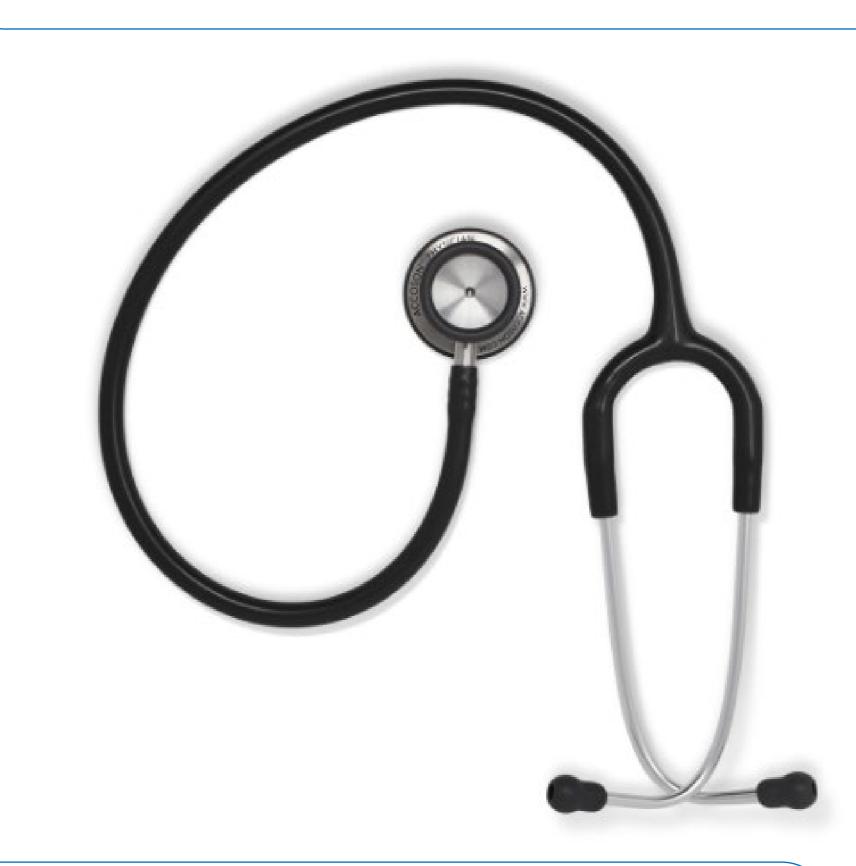
How can the mental wellbeing of female ITPs be supported as they transition to the Canadian health care workforce?

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 ITFPs 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 ITFPs 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

