

COVID-19 and Refugee Families in Montréal

TITLE OF RESEARCH: COVID-19 and Refugee Families in Montréal: Strategies for Reaching **Hard-to-reach Populations in Health Emergencies**

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SUMMARY: This study built on the Québec segment of a CIHR-funded 4-year longitudinal study, Syrian Refugee Integration and Long-Term Health (SyRIA.lth), to examine the challenges Syrian newcomers faced during COVID-19, their coping strategies, and the public health information they accessed.

LINK: Click here to read the executive summary and click here to read the report





The pandemic created insecurities around access to:

HEALTH CARE

WORK

ABILITY TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR FAMILY



51% reported difficulties with their mental health

Sources of information on COVID-19 was mainly from:











52% strongly agreed information provided by the government and health officials was reliable



39% Agreed to some extent

Participants did not rely on settlement agencies for COVID-19 information, as many had lived in Canada for more than 4 years and had lost contact with settlement agencies.

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Working outside the home was the largest impediment to their ability to follow social distancing guidelines

Recommendations:

- Public health communications to newcomers can be improved by utilizing social media and by providing information in a range of languages.
- Settlement agencies need to partner with health-, migration-, or faith-focused community entities to ensure that newcomers have access to information and resources beyond the first year of settlement.
- Access to mental health services needs to be a priority during health emergencies. Mental health services need to be socio-culturally attuned to the needs of families with refugee experience. Strategies for reducing social isolation should be developed in collaboration with refugee populations.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition.

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