Implementing and Evaluating Virtual Groups on Reproductive Health among Arabic-Speaking Refugees

AHMAD KARZOUN
DR. HEIKE THIEL DE BOCANEGRÁ
REPRONET
Introduction

RELIGION AND CULTURE
Religious taboos
Cultural preference for c-sections

REFUGEE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH BARRIERS
Refugees face increased barriers to reproductive health services¹

INCREASE IN C-SECTIONS³
18% increase in c-sections (02-08)
250% increase C-section requests
ReproNet

Aims to enhance reproductive health in California refugee women.

ReproNet is working to create a state-wide refugee Reproductive Health Network in which refugee women have been directly engaged as stakeholders.

Part of UC
UCI Lead
Subawardees at UCSF, UCD, & UCSD
Practicum Objectives

- Interview Analysis
  - Identify variables that may be related to the success of a virtual group or webinar
- C-Section Webinar
  - Develop and implement a webinar on c-sections to refugee women in English and Arabic
## Methods

**Interview Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSLATE</th>
<th>TRANSCRIBE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Iraqi refugee women interviews</td>
<td>Transcribe and upload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ReproNet resource persons interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYZE</th>
<th>PRESENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify variables for success of virtual groups or webinars</td>
<td>ReproNet steering committee meeting November 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>C-Section Webinar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| MUSLIM SOCIAL SOCIETY SOCIAL SERVICES FOUNDATION | DR. HIND AL-AZAWI  
Iraqi Gynecology Hospitalist Fellow |
| Host and Outreach | LITERATURE REVIEW  
Construct and translate presentation |
|              | HOLD EVENT  
November 28, 2020  
Questionnaire |
WHAT IS A C-SECTION?

1. A Cesarean section (C-section) is the delivery of a baby through surgery.
   - Generally a safe procedure

2. Surgery requires a cut to be made in the mother’s lower abdomen and uterus.
   - Safer of the mother
   - Safer for the baby
   - Safer for both

 قبل القيصرية

1. ليس ثوب المشفى الخاص
2. تركيب الفتحة الولادة وتغليف المحلول
3. تثبت الجسم على طاولة العملية
4. تنظيف جلد البطن وحلق الشعر حول منطقة العملية
5. تغطية الجسم بغراء إلا مكان شق العملية
6. بدء التخدير الموضعي
7. وصل اجهزة الراقة للقلب والتنفس والأوكسجين وضغط الدم
8. وضع قناع أوكسجين لمساعدتك بالنفس عند الحاجة
WOMEN COMFORTABLE WITH TECHNOLOGY

Skeptical about telehealth

RELY ON SOCIAL APPS FOR NEWS, COMMUNICATION, AND INFORMATION

Whatsapp, Facebook, Viber, Google

RECEPTIVE TO VIRTUAL PLATFORMS

Some are open to virtual groups, others hesitant due to privacy concerns
23 REGISTRANTS

11 English Attendees (5 coordinators)
0 Arabic Attendees

5 QUESTIONS ASKED

Difficult to engage women in dialogue
Analysis

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

SMALL SAMPLE SIZE
Results were consistent

WOMEN OPEN TO VIRTUAL GROUPS
Focused efforts/interventions in future
Analysis

C-Section Webinar

LOW TURNOUT
Due to poor timing
• Conflict with Thanksgiving

OUTREACH LIMITATIONS
COVID restrictions
Lack of direct outreach
Short timeframe

FUTURE PRESENTATIONS
Arabic in January
Potential for Dari/Farsi
## Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OPEN TO WEBINARS</strong></th>
<th><strong>MAIN LIMITATION</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open to webinars, despite some privacy concerns</td>
<td>Lack of attendance Couldn’t properly assess efficacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMFORTABLE WITH TECHNOLOGY</strong></th>
<th><strong>OUTREACH</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodes well for future virtual groups and webinars</td>
<td>More individual-level outreach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would like to take the time to thank...
References


Implementing and Evaluating Virtual Groups on Reproductive Health Among Arabic-Speaking Refugees

Ahmad Karzoun⁴, Heike Thiel de Bocanegra, PhD, MPH²
UC Davis, Department of Public Health Sciences, UC Irvine, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology

Abstract
Reproductive health is particularly important in Arab refugees, who have religious and cultural taboos regarding reproductive health. Considering the rising rates of c-section, and the preference for birth by c-section in Arab cultures, there was a need for c-section education for Arab refugee women.

Methods
• Interview Analysis: Translated, transcribed, and analyzed interviews of 3 Iraqi refugee women and 2 ReproNet resource persons.
• Presented findings in ReproNet steering committee meeting on Nov 10th, 2020.
• C-Section Webinar: Conducted literature review on c-sections, partnered with MAS-SSF to disseminate and host the event, partnered with Dr. Hind Al-Azawi to present the webinar, constructed presentation in English and Arabic, and was held on Nov 28th, 2020.

Results
• Interview Analysis: Iraqi refugee women were comfortable with technology, but skeptical about telehealth unless under severe health conditions. Iraqi refugee women relied on social apps like WhatsApp, Facebook, Viber, and Google for news, communication, and information. Women supported the idea of webinars, but some felt that they had limited privacy and spousal/familial freedom at home.
• C-Section Webinar: 23 total registrants, with 11 English participants (5 organizers), and 0 Arabic participants. 5 total questions were asked; however, it was difficult to engage women in a dialogue.

Discussion
• Interview Analysis: Although interview sample size was small, answers across refugee populations were consistent. ReproNet resource persons’ interview answers confirmed that refugee interviews were representative of general Iraqi refugee population. Findings allow ReproNet to better understand the needs of the Iraqi refugee community and to develop specific interventions within that community.
• C-Section Webinar: Low turnout could have been attributed to poor timing, as the event coincided with the Thanksgiving holiday. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and a short timeframe, outreach was limited to social media posts and social group chat messages. Presentation is highly adaptable. Future Arabic presentations are provisionally scheduled for January.

Conclusion
• Women were overall comfortable with technology and receptive to the idea of learning joining virtual groups and webinars, despite some privacy concerns.
• The main limitation of the webinar was the lack of attendance to properly assess its efficacy.
• The fact that women heavily engage with technology and social interactions through technology bodes well for the viability of educational webinars.
• Future outreach efforts need to be stronger on the individual level (personal invitations and follow-up) in order to ensure higher attendance numbers.

Acknowledgements
• ReproNet: Dr. Heike Thiel de Bocanegra, PhD, MPH
• Nossin Khan, MPH
• Serine Al-Banna

Citations