ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE NEEDS OF ELDERLY IRAQI AND BHUTANESE REFUGEES LIVING IN PHILADELPHIA

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Capstone Project
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April 1, 2015
Assessment of community-based service needs of elderly refugees

- Introduction & Definition of the Problem
- Methods
- Results
- Data Analysis
- Discussion
- Recommendations
- Limitations
What is a refugee?
Background: Iraqi Refugees

- US has accepted about 73,000 Iraqi refugees
- Political Instability
- Economic Stagnation
- Violence
Elderly Refugees

UNHCR’s statement on geriatric refugees:

“It is commonly assumed that older people are more likely to choose to stay in their place of origin, or, more tragically still, to perish in flight or to pine away and die in exile. In fact, older refugees make up some **8.5 percent** of the overall population of concern to UNHCR, and reach up to more than **30 percent** for some caseloads” (2000).
Pennsylvania

- Refugees in PA: 3,033
- 510 Iraqi
- 987 Bhutanese

- Refugee Resettlement Program
  - Case management
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Financial services
Philadelphia

- Refugees in Philly: 774
- 241 Iraqi
- 176 Bhutanese

Local Organizations

LCFS

HIAS Pennsylvania

Jefferson

Nationalities Service Center
Research Questions

What are the major sources of stress for Iraqi and Bhutanese elderly refugees?

What types of services and programs do they want and believe will help them to address their needs?
Methods

- Exploratory study

- **Target population:** convenience sample of 6 Iraqi and 6 Bhutanese refugees
  
  - Inclusion criteria: 60 and above & resettled in Philadelphia from either Iraq or Nepal within 3 years
  
  - Recruitment: First 2 weeks of January
Semi-structured Interview

1) Participant Background Information
2) Health & Functional Status
3) Social Roles & Activities
4) Sources of Stress
5) Knowledge of & Access to Programs
Data collection took place in participants’ homes in South & Northeast Philadelphia.
Data Analysis

- A priori themes (reflected in interview domains)
- Data organized in an excel sheet
- Opened ended responses were categorized by the five domains & analyzed for cross-cutting themes
## Demographics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Iraqi (n=6)</th>
<th>Bhutanese (n=6)</th>
<th>Total (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age, y</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>60-74</td>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>60-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>4 (66.66%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (66.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5 (83.33%)</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (91.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Proficiency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESL Training</strong></td>
<td>2 (33.33%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (44.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Iraqi (n=6)</td>
<td>Bhutanese (n=6)</td>
<td>Total (n=12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health &amp; Function</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+ health conditions</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty managing health conditions</td>
<td>2 (33.33%)</td>
<td>5 (83.33%)</td>
<td>7 (58.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leave home alone</strong></td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience Stress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the time</td>
<td>2 (33.33%)</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>3 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (83.33%)</td>
<td>8 (66.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (8.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of interaction outside of immediate family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times per week</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (66.66%)</td>
<td>4 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>2 (33.33%)</td>
<td>2 (33.33%)</td>
<td>4 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1 (16.67%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (8.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of PCA services</strong></td>
<td>2 (33.33%)</td>
<td>6 (100%)</td>
<td>8 (66.66%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thematic Analysis

- **Health & Functional Status**
  - Difficulty managing conditions, health literacy, navigating health insurance

- **Social Roles & Activities**
  - Decreased social engagement, poor mobility, lack of activity

- **Sources of Stress**
  - Language barriers, concern for family members, environment, financial uncertainty

- **Knowledge of & Access to Programming**
  - Language barriers, frustration with PCA
Cross-Cutting Thematic Analysis

Managing Conditions
- Health Literacy
- Health Insurance
- Navigation

Chronic Dependency
- Elder and Caregiver Stress

Social Disintegration
- Isolation, lack of engagement

Physical Capability
- Navigation Challenges

Health

Mobility

Language
“They don’t speak, read, or write English. This negatively affects every aspect of life, from their ability to schedule sick visits, to taking public transportation, speaking with physicians, understanding printed health information, retrieving and taking their medication, reading recipes and cooking, and participating in classes or social activities with other seniors.”
Health

- Managing Chronic Conditions
- Health Literacy
- Navigating Health Insurance

“I would feel good if I knew how insurance worked, then I wouldn’t have to worry. But the past insurance, the Keystone one, covers a lot, but now the insurance I have doesn’t cover a lot.”
Mobility

- Physical Limitations
  - Trauma of Migration
  - Effects of Aging
- Navigation Challenges
  - Public Transportation
  - Fear of Getting Lost
  - Change in Environment
“It’s difficult to navigate the city in general, especially for the elderly. For the Bhutanese, back home they were able to walk around, and here it’s a lot harder because the built environment is challenging and the weather is much different.”

Director of JCRH
Overarching Theme: Chronic Dependency

- Fewer opportunities for integration
  - Less exposure to new society
- Single caretaker
  - Responsibility for parent = Interpreting, accompanying parents to appointments, managing health problems, etc.
  - Maintaining household, raising children, college courses, multiple jobs
Overarching theme: Social Disintegration

- Different lifestyle in US vs country of origin
- Lack of knowledge of services
  - Outreach challenges
  - Need for cultural competence training
  - Lack of funding
Health | Language | Mobility

Chronic Dependency & Social Disintegration

Now what?
Recommendations: Activities

- A Place for Programming
  - Northeast and/or South Philadelphia
- Games & Gardening
  - Opportunity to connect with peers
  - Respite for caregivers
  - Exposure to neighborhood
Recommendations: Classes

- Specialized Instruction
  - ESL
  - Health Literacy/Insurance Navigation
  - Public Transportation
Recommendations: Health

- Community Health Workers
  - Home/follow up visits
  - Prevention strategies
- Partnership with OT/PT Programs
Immediate Next Steps

- Asset Mapping
- Partnerships
  - Aging Services Network
  - Social Service Organizations
  - OT/PT Programs
- Education/training
- Future Research
  - Caregiver Focus Groups
  - Resource Guide
Limitations

- Small sample size
- Cultural barriers
- Limited Funding
  - Used for interpreting informed consent
  - English speaking family members instead of certified interpreters
धन्यवाद & شكرًا

(Thank you)
References

References


References


References