‘Differences between the earth and the sky’: migrant parents’ views of nurse-led child health services in the UK

Presentation Abstract

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Introduction: Migrating between countries necessitates movement and adjustment between systems of healthcare which differ in provision. Children of migrant parents use most types of healthcare services less than local children, with only emergency and hospital services used more (Markkula et al 2018). In the UK National Health Service (NHS) nurses provide primary care services and health promotion to children.

Objective: To explore parents’ views and experiences of using nurse-led health services for their pre-school children post-migration.

Design: An exploratory study using qualitative methodology.

Methodology: Five focus groups were held with parents of pre-school children who had migrated to the United Kingdom (UK) from Romania, Poland, Pakistan or Somalia within the last ten years (n=28). One focus group consisted of parents of Roma Gypsy ethnicity. One group chose to speak in English, with concurrent translation provided for the other groups. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Results: Participants described profound differences between child health services in the UK and in their country of origin, which varied according to nationality and ethnic group. All groups appreciated services free at the point of delivery and an equitable service offered to all children. Primary care services such as treatment of minor illness and immunisation were familiar to parents, but pre-migration these were commonly delivered by doctors. All groups were unfamiliar with child health promotion delivered in the home by public health nurses; some perceived this service as intruding on the autonomy of parents.

Conclusion: When adjusting to a new healthcare system migrants negotiate differences in service provision, which challenge their existing views on the roles of professionals. Communalities in experiences indicate that improved communication is needed on UK services for pre-school children, particularly on the roles, skills and capabilities of nurses.

References


Keywords: Child health; migrant health; Roma; primary care: child health promotion; surveillance; qualitative methods