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# **Health literacy and impact factors of the Southeast Asian immigrant women in Taiwan**

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# Introduction

- Recently, more and more evidences have shown that people who have insufficient health literacy can't realize the health information and use the healthcare resource appropriately.
- Health literacy is critical to effective communication between individuals and their health care providers, Inadequate health literacy will have worse health status, health behavior, and Increase medical costs.



- Otherwise, many countries have policy about the health literacy for using healthcare resources appropriately.



- According to the analysis from the Ministry of the Interior in Taiwan, the population of immigrant women and citizenship have **442,541** by March 2013 , and the Southeast Asian immigrant women was **29.8%**, the first one is ***Vietnam***, and second is ***Indonesia***.
- The immigrant women are lower economic, linguistic barriers and cultural incompetence that become high-risk of population.



- In order to help new immigrant women adapt themselves to lives in Taiwan, the Taiwan government has made a number of health policy.
  - basic literacy education for Chinese
  - free prenatal examination
  - hygiene education guidance for healthcare measures
  - training of translators to assist immigrant women during treatment.



# Purpose

- Health literacy has been recognized as an important attribute to health outcome and health care utilization. Immigrants are at the high risk of poor health literacy due to language barriers and unfamiliar sociocultural context in the mainstream society.
- The purpose of this study was to explore the ways Southeast Asian immigrant women gain access to, understand, and use health information and services in healthcare delivery system of Taiwan.



# Method

- This qualitative study used exploratory focus group and in-depth interview to collect information particularly with respect to the concerns of the health literacy framework.
- Based on the **five focus groups** conducted with **21** Southeast Asian immigrant women , and **18** in-depth individual interviews with a range of health care providers.



# Result

Two parts:

- The health literacy and health needs of immigrant women.
- Health care system stakeholders' perceptions of immigrant women' health literacy.





# The health literacy and health needs of immigrant women

- linguistic barriers and culture incompetence, so that immigrant women are difficult to obtain health information and realize the health content.
- Husband and husband's relatives are the key person for immigrant women's access to health information.



- When using the health care system need someone to accompany are inconvenience, making immigrant women reduce healthcare utilization.
- Use of health care services, and communicate with health providers from the process, immigrant women feel respected or discrimination.
- Child care is the first of health needs of immigrant women.



# Health care system stakeholders' perceptions

- New immigrant women mainly receive health information from hometown friends they trust.
- Health information can be propagated most effectively via people around or TVs.
- Translators who give assistances to immigrant women in treatment is limited in the case of professional medical knowledge.



- linguistic barriers and culture incompetence, immigrant women often confront domestic violence and may need marriage counseling.



- The results indicate clearly that, without basic literate skills, the majority immigrant women had difficulty becoming health literate enough to manage health-relevant information and navigate within the context of Taiwan healthcare system.
- Child care and mental health are two most important healthcare information and services immigrant women need.



- A communication gap between immigrant women and health care providers is often created as the results of language barriers and cultural incompetence.



# Conclusions

- With limited language skills, immigrants face numerous barriers to navigate health information, interact with healthcare providers, and gain access to healthcare service.
- Health literacy of Southeast Asian immigrant would be concerned.



- To promote the health literacy for Southeast Asian immigrant women, and their ability of self-care would be improved.
- The result of this study would be the guild and referral for future study, and get will health care availability in Taiwan.



# Thank You for your attention

