

Co-Designed, Culturally Tailored Cervical Screening Education with Migrant and Refugee Women in Australia

A Feasibility Study

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Background: Participation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women from migrant and refugee backgrounds in cervical screening is crucial to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem within the next 20 years. However, **CALD women report low participation in cervical screening**. Research is needed to investigate the process, feasibility and acceptability of culturally tailored delivery and evaluation of cervical screening health education, particularly given recent changes to the Australian national cervical screening program.

Methods: CALD community health workers took part in a two-day training program, facilitated by Family Planning NSW and Western Sydney University. Day 1 addressed knowledge about cervical screening; day 2 explored facilitation methods and strategies for tailoring the forums for individual communities. They then co-designed, and co-facilitated cervical screening health promotion forums within their communities.



Key findings

- Forums were delivered to a total of seven groups, involving 12 unique sessions (see Table 1) with 71 CALD women from East and West Africa and the Middle East.
- The co-design and co-delivery of the forums was **time and resource intensive** however allowed for **cultural tailoring** resulting in **engagement with ‘hard to reach’ CALD women, improved health literacy and intention to screen**.
- **Flexibility** in the **intervention implementation** was crucial to ensure forums were responsive to community interests and needs.
- Both face-to-face and online formats were **feasible and acceptable** to CALD women.

Table 1. Co-designed, culturally tailored health promotion forums overview

Community	Modality	Forum topics/ activities	Languages
West African (young women)	Face-to-face (weekend, daytime)	1. Cervical screening; zumba class; lunch	English and Krio
West African	Online (weekday, evening)	1. Stress management 2. Cervical screening 3. Breast, bowel screening	English
East African	Face-to-face (weekday, daytime)	1. Cervical screening; breast screening; zumba class; lunch	Juba-Arabic
East African (young women)	Online (weekday, evening)	1. Stress management 2. Cervical screening	English and Somali
East African	Online (weekend, evening)	1. Cervical Screening, stress management,	English and Arabic
Multiethnic African group	Face-to-face (weekend, daytime)	1. Cervical screening; breast screening	English
Middle Eastern (multiple countries)	Face-to-face (weekday, daytime) Online (weekday, evening)	1. Breast, bowel screening 2. Bone and joint health 3. Cervical screening	English and Arabic with translator

“For me it was the ground opening, ground-breaking which is very good, especially when we have women’s meetings to have this kind of information distributed and discussed openly, it’s very positive and I love it.”

Taking the time to “listen to” and “understand” each group” and “the barriers they face”, including cultural and religious beliefs and norms, enabled facilitators to tailor information and address community specific myths and misinformation.

“It’s more than just like learning something. It’s something we can put it back into our lives and our family and our friends”

The ability of facilitators to “deviate from the PowerPoint” and “let the ball roll according to what we [participants] wanted to know” was viewed by women as a “very effective way of getting information”.



“Using the networks of community health workers to access the community, and activities such as zumba and lunch, encouraged participation by women who wouldn’t usually access mainstream community education.”

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