Big Outcomes: Integrating an oral health wellness program into a nurse-led refugee health service

Key Words: Refugee, Prevention, Oral Health, Model of Care.

Leeanne Schmidt1, Margaret Pukallus2, Gillian Hillier1, Wendy Philips1, Anita Stubbings1, Christine Foldi2, Dimitry Murdoch1, Erene Hutton2, Julie Johnson2, Jaya Krishnasamy1, Jasmine Sayeed1
1Metro South Refugee Health Service, 2Metro South Oral Health

Background
- Refugees are eligible within the first 12 months of arrival in Queensland (QLD)
- Over 215 ethnicities, 26% born overseas
- Newly arrived people present with lack of trust and fear due to previous experience
- Poor oral health due to no previous access to care & periods of deprivation
- Social disadvantage due to resettlement, language barrier & poor health literacy
- Healthy Oral Health (OH) care impacts on overall health outcomes
- OH service capacity unable to meet local population growth

Objective
- Determine the wait list for newly arrived people
- Increase preventative OH care delivery
- Review cultural responsiveness of Oral Health Services (OHS)
- Explore alternative model of care to deliver timely care
- Interventions needed to be cost neutral

Methods
- Comprehensive review of the waiting list data
- Review interpreter usage
- Map existing health pathways
- Identification of key partners

Initial Outcomes
- Integrating OHS at the same time as the nursing health assessment
- Redesign of services: Oral Health Therapists delivers early assessment, triage, first line treatment and education
  - Clinician lead innovation, building rapport & trust with key partners & communities
  - Screening Tool
  - New South Wales Refugee Health Appointment Reminder Translation Tool
- Strengthened partner relationships and communication
- Program delivered with no additional costs

Big Picture Outcomes
- Contributed to the development - Refugee Health & Wellbeing Policy Action Plan for QLD 2017-20
- Qld Oral Health Refugee Health Working Group
- Intersectoral collaboration across Hospital and Health Services & 11 organisations
- Sharing of pathway, tools & resources at State and National levels
- Intersectoral knowledge of wait times & referral pathways
- Dental Fairs in partnership with the Tzu Chi Foundation
- Building cultural sensitivity in staff
- Resources developed - 8 languages that are culturally, linguistically & literary appropriate

References