

Asian migrants navigating New Zealand primary care: a qualitative study.

Summary:

Information on the responsiveness of the New Zealand (NZ) health system to Asians to enable navigation of healthcare services is currently lacking. Barriers experienced by Asian patients to enable optimal navigation of, and engagement with, healthcare services are also sparse.

Aims: This research aimed to: (1) document and analyse resources available on the websites of general practices that aid in optimal health care navigation for NZ Asians; and (2) explore the barriers perceived by Asian migrants to navigating the NZ Health System, particularly primary care.

Methods: This study involved qualitative document analysis of existing resources on general practice websites. Information on perceived barriers and experiences of navigating the health system was collected through semi-structured interviews (n = 9).

Results: Overall, 293 general practice websites were analysed. The themes from content analysis were: availability of basic information, linguistic accessibility, and culturally appropriate support for patients. Relevant and reliable information facilitating effective navigation of the NZ health system by Asians was lacking. Interview data supported the findings about the general practices, with participants reporting significant difficulties navigating and understanding NZ primary care services.

Discussion and Conclusions: Current navigational resources presume knowledge that Asian migrants do not often possess. Participants felt this lack of accessible information acutely, and it influenced how they perceived and engaged with healthcare services. Increased accessibility through resources in Asian languages, including an overview of how Health NZ functions in providing health care and professional interpreter services, would be critical to increase appropriate engagement with healthcare services and thus contribute to better health outcomes for Asians.