

Press Release

****For Immediate Release****

September 16, 2002

From the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence and the Canadian Women's Health Network:

Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women Experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Study Finds

A new study released by the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence reports that immigrant, refugee and visible minority women often suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and that physicians and psychiatrists do not appear to recognize symptoms of this disorder among their clients.

Immigrant and refugee women often come from war-torn countries and may have been exposed to disaster, incidents of extreme trauma, and continued gender oppression. The process of migration and the experiences of settlement as an immigrant in Canada may also add to the distress and trauma.

The study of trauma, and in particular, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is of relevance to policy makers, health professionals and other community workers because of the ongoing arrival and settlement of new immigrant and refugee women from many parts of the world. In their own words, women in the study describe how health professionals are often unfamiliar with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The report, which focuses on the experiences of women in Saskatchewan, provides excerpts from the stories recounted by immigrant and refugee women and information about how they addressed their experiences with community based services, what was useful to them in their healing, and what the barriers were.

Conducted under the auspices of the Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women of Saskatchewan, this study highlights the need for policy makers, medical practitioners, mental health workers and other community providers to improve services to address the mental health needs of immigrants and refugees.

Full study details are available at: <http://www.pwhce.ca/ptsd-immigrant.htm>

Prof. Judy White will present the study findings at a community presentation, 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Lived Experience of Immigrant,

Refugee, and Visible Minority Women' at the University of Winnipeg, October 1, 11:45 – 2 p.m. in Room 2M70.

Sponsored by the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, The Centre for War Affected Families and the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence. For more information contact (204) 982-6632.

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