

Labor Migration and Social Determinants of Health in Myanmar

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Purpose: The objective of this study is to compare social determinants of health and self-reported health status indicators across groups with varying migration statuses in Myanmar in order to increase the scientific evidence base for decision-making around migration and health. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), “in Myanmar, internal migrants have been shown to be vulnerable...” and it is “a critical time to support the improvement of labour migration governance.” Migration, education, and socioeconomic status are interrelated; and these structural inequities can be targeted through policy and resource allocation. Analyzing migration with a social determinants’ lens allows for greater understanding of the complexities across migration groups and of the pushes and pulls of migration. An epidemiological survey was conducted in Mandalay, Myanmar between July 2016 and January 2017. Out of 456 participants, 132 (28.9%) had experienced migration. 74.2% migrated for labor or economic related reasons. 6.8% of migrants identified their migration as forced although all of them moved for better jobs in new locations. There were no statistical differences between migrants (forced or not forced) and non-migrants, across household income, education and self-reported general health status. In order to support effective services for migrants, including targeted health interventions, we must have a clear picture of the needs, and also the strengths, of different migrant groups. Our study points to interesting socio-economic similarities between economic migrants and the general population. This highlights the need for further research to differentiate migrant groups within Myanmar.

Public health or related research Social and behavioral sciences