Photovoice as a Social Transformative Tool: Unpacking the Experiences of Immigrants and Refugees Living with HIV in Canada

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ABSTRACT

1026 immigrants and refugees tested positive for HIV (IRLWH) in Canada in 2018 (Haddad, et al, 2019). IRLWH experience discriminatory behaviors because of because of the immigration and HIV status; culturally appropriate supports and resources for IRLWH are lacking. Financial difficulties are experienced by many new immigrants, they may be unable to meet their health care or mental health needs, particularly if they are IRLWH (Chen et al., 2015). Language barriers, loss of social support and a lack of health coverage can impact the ability for IRLWH to access care (Rapid Response Service, 2014). There can be stigma surrounding HIV within the cultural community, impacting the level of support for IRLWH (Rapid Response Service, 2014). IRLWH experience mistreatment by service providers, lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, lack of awareness of local programs, unemployment and housing issues in Canada (Chen et al., 2015; Gatteri et al., 2020). To augment the limited extant knowledge on the challenges of IRLWH and based on the implications of a study that claimed the need for a further research exploring the voices of IRLWH using photovoice (Getteri, et.al., 2020), this community based photovoice study was designed with an aim to understand intersectional oppressions experienced by IRLWH across Alberta in general, with a focus on the COVID-19 pandemic in particular from determinants of health perspectives.

Keywords: Immigrants and Refugees; HIV, Photovoice, Intersectional Violence, Mental Health