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Review



Unveiling silenced narratives: a scoping review on sexual function challenges in migrant and refugee women

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Spotlight on Sexual Medicine Reviews (SMR)





Sexual function in migrant and refugee women

Table 1. Search strategy conducted in online databases.

Population	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("refugee*" OR "asylum seeker*" OR "migrant*" OR "ethnic minorities" OR "culturally and linguistically diverse" OR "undocumented migrant*" OR "immigrant*") AND
Women	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("women" OR "female" OR reproductive-aged women OR mother) AND
Topic	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("sexual behaviour*" OR "sexual activity" OR sex OR sexuality OR "sexual intercourse" OR "sexual wellbeing" OR "sexual relationships" OR "Sexual Partner*" OR "Sexual Dysfunctions, Psychological" OR "Sexual Arousal" OR "arousal" OR "Libido" OR "Orgasm" OR "Coitus" OR "sexual desire" OR "desire" OR "sexual pain" OR "sexual satisfaction" OR "Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder*" OR "sexual dysfunction*" OR "erection" OR "lubrication")

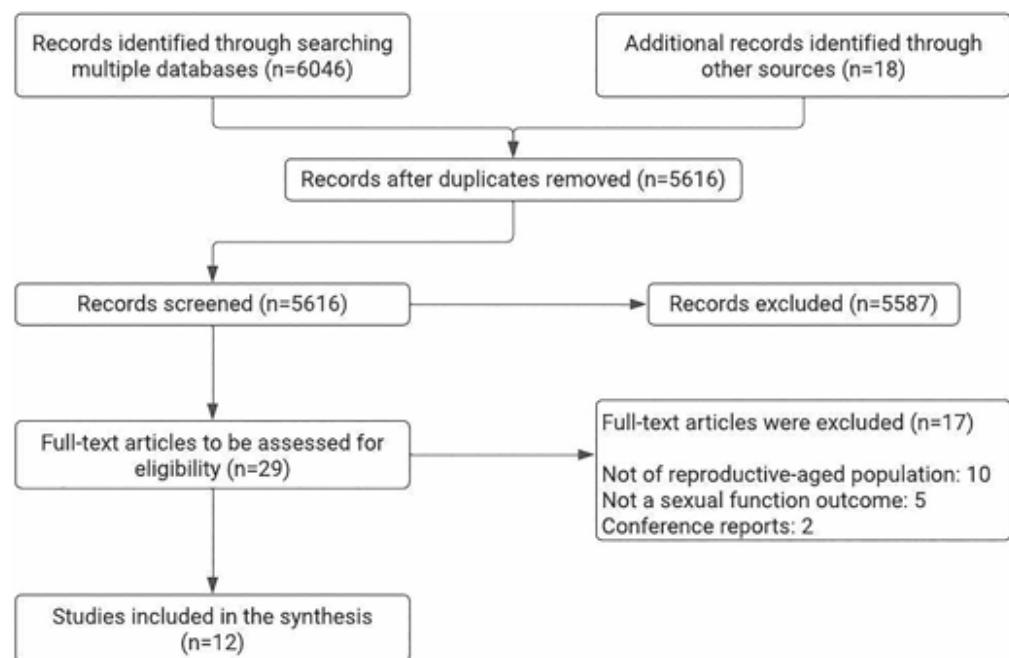


Figure 1. PRISMA-ScR flowchart diagram. PRISMA-ScR, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for Scoping Reviews.

Very limited research in this underserved population



Four themes, all emphasizing need for cultural humility in sexual healthcare



- Sexual pleasure and satisfaction
 - Lower sexual experience and knowledge in migrant women, leading to lower reported pleasure
 - Highly heterogeneous findings
- Sexual desire and arousal
 - Greater desire/arousal problems in migrant women, but not necessarily greater distress
- Sexual attitudes
 - Perceived lower control over sexuality in migrant women
 - Greater sexual guilt if cultural sexual standards not met
- Acculturation
 - Lower mainstream acculturation may contribute to higher anxiety around sexuality





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Clinical recommendations

- Directly assess sexual knowledge
 - Ask about history of sexual healthcare experiences
- Ask for permission to offer education and information on sexuality
 - Normalize having questions about one's sexuality
 - Normalize talking to medical provider about sexuality
- Reassure patients with high sex guilt & anxiety
 - Especially as they adjust to a new culture with different sexual ideals
 - Promote pleasure as a positive & appropriate goal
- Use culturally sensitive assessment tools
 - And help us researchers develop more!

Access to sexual functioning measures in a range languages at this QR code

