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# How spirituality appears in migrant parents' discourses regarding their experiences with accessing pediatric healthcare?

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## Background

Spirituality has been considered a sociocultural determinant of health. In fact it has been stated that it acts as a social mediator of health. Literature frequently addresses spirituality and religion's benefits. Still, there is a lack of knowledge on how social inequalities translate to migrant parents' perception of spiritual care when pursuing healthcare resources. Research into the social dimension of health is incipient, particularly in migrant population, and in terms of possible repercussions and inequalities in children's health and care (Conceição, 2019).

It is acknowledged that failures in understanding the experience and comprehensive care of migrant people, undeniably impact maternal-children assistance.

These difficulties reduce adherence to healthcare pursuit and effectiveness of treatments and lead to a high number of dropouts and successive return of users to the emergency circuit, increasing costs, but most importantly increasing risks to migrants specifically the most vulnerable ones: children's (children´s health and well-being).

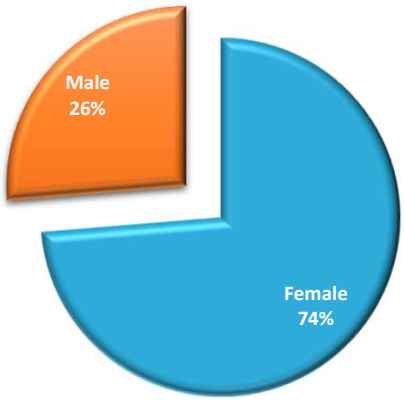
## Purpose

This study aimed to identify spiritual needs in migrant parents' discourses regarding their experiences with accessing Portuguese healthcare.

## Methods

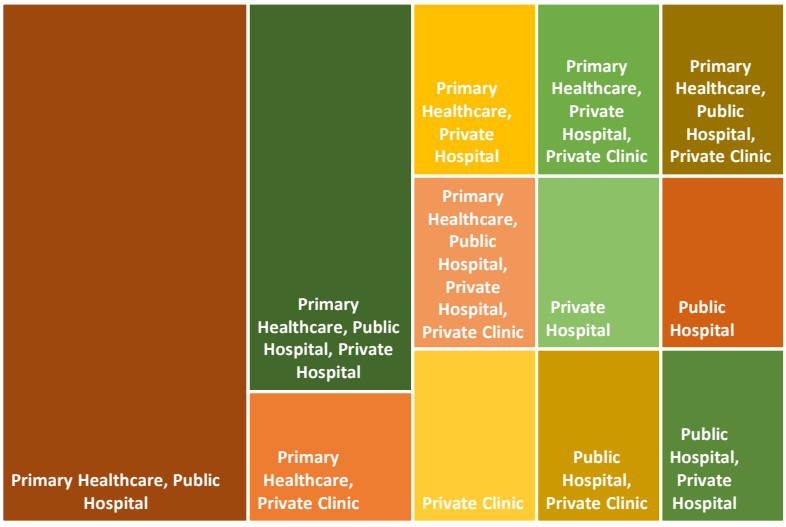
This exploratory, retrospective, and cross-sectional study is based on interviews, including: Sociodemographic; Spiritual and religious characterization; Experience of parents' access to healthcare; Instruments: World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment Instrument – short form (WHOQOL-Bref); Resilience Scale (RS); Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire (SWBQ). This paper presents responses of a non-probabilistic and convenience sample. Participant recruitment. The inclusion criteria were migrant parents living in Portugal. This study received approval from the University's Ethics Committee. Data analysis was performed using the SPSS and NVIVO programs.

## Results




Age **29 - 53** years
(Mean age 45 years)

Living in Portugal
**7 months - 28 years**
(Mean 16 years)




**Highest scores SWBQ**
17. Feel respect for others (M=4.42)

**Lowest scores SWBQ**
8. Feel trust between individuals(M=3.42)

**Highest scores RS**
19. My life has meaning (M=5.89)

**Lowest scores RS**
9. I seldom wonder what the point of it all is (M=4.74)

*"Easy access to healthcare in the public sector. Long waiting times for specialist appointments. In general, we find committed, trustworthy and responsible professionals in their work, always with quality and good disposition."*

## Conclusions

This study raises the need for an imperative response to protect vulnerable citizens, namely migrants safeguard their rights, and act against the accumulation of deficiencies that could negatively impact their health, and spiritual living. Spirituality must be considered a legitimate factor that affects individual health and well-being and deserves the same attention and focus as any other social determinant (political, cultural, and economic).

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