

TITLE: Understanding the unique needs of immigrant populations: a new challenge for biomedical libraries in Italy.

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INTRODUCTION:

Immigrant populations are a new issue for Italy where there has not been a long tradition of coping with the cancer information needs related to immigrants in the community. Other countries with experience in this field can lead us towards a correct cultural and practical approach using the most effective and appropriate information and technology strategies.

OBJECTIVES: Understanding the new immigrant patients information needs and providing them with adequate information tools

METHODS:

Thanks to a close collaboration of our Institute - the Centro di Riferimento Oncologico (CRO) of Aviano, North East of Italy - one of the eight Italian Cancer Comprehensive Centres - with the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH), Toronto (Canada), we are embarking on initiatives to empower global immigrants through the provision of health information and services. As a first step, our goal is to learn how to be able to partner with international organizations to ensure the provision of reliable and effective information, especially around issues of screen, prevention and understanding treatment options. In addition, we are trying to overcome cultural barriers through a close collaboration with Oncologic Institute "Giovanni Paolo II", Bari (Italy), our co-partner in a multicentric Italian project that is producing educational material for prevention of female tumours in 4 languages (extra Italian). The added value of this material is that information about prevention of cancer are related to information about laws and rights of immigrants in Italy. This project is a joint venture of the Network of Italian Cancer Institutes, the Federation of Voluntary Cancer Patients Associations (FAVO) and the National Institute of Health (ISS) aiming to set up a global Network in Italy between the Cancer Information Points/Patient and Family Libraries.

RESULTS: We are currently exploring new collaborations and strategies for sharing informational resources such as booklets for Italian patients and immigrants about female cancer prevention in Romanian and Albanian languages as well as developing unique database such as CIGNOweb.it and other IT solutions between CRO, PMH and Bari Oncologic Institute to share culturally sensitive information resources. Medical Subject Headings in English and Italian is used in CIGNOweb.it database thanks to the translation of ISS.

CONCLUSIONS: The new immigrants are a challenge for libraries globally and we must be ready to serve the immigrants in the community as well as our digital immigrants. Collaboration with Centres with experiences in serving immigrant populations, cooperating in creating/translating/adapting and sharing local resources, and implementing a multilingual database are a key for success.