

Social Media Networking and Information Behaviours in Youth Refugees: A protocol for a systematic scoping review

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BACKGROUND

Between 2005 and 2014, Canada saw a decrease in the number of refugees admitted. The number of newcomers in 2005 was over 35 000. In 2014, under 25 000 refugees had been allowed to resettle in Canada.¹ However, since November 2015, Canada has resettled over 40 081 refugees from Syria.² In 2014, 34% of the resettled Syrian refugees were under the age of 15 years old, while another 15% of the resettled Syrian refugees were between the ages of 15 and 24 years old.³ Many of these youths have access to information and communication technologies (ICTs). For example, 86% of Syrian youth who temporarily lived in a Jordanian refugee camp (Za'atari) personally own a mobile phone. Moreover, over 50% of these youths connected to, and used the Internet at least once a day.⁴ The process of resettling a large group of Syrian refugees in Canada is complex and consideration must be given to the demographic composition of this group. There is a need to examine the use of strategies and tools, especially ICTs, Syrian youth employ to support themselves or their families when experiencing resettlement, adapting to new contexts, and integrating into Canadian society. For example, proficiency with internet-based social media platforms may sustain and allow the growth of support networks that exist. This familiarity with web-based, communication applications can also allow youth to connect more broadly to diverse services, access real time information and assist with the complexities of resettlement and integration in place. As highlighted in The Canadian Medical Association Journal Guidelines: Caring for Syrian Refugee Family, the Syrian war and accompanying high degree of trauma experienced by many Syrians, necessitates Canadian practitioners and organizations to be prepared with appropriate skills and tools to connect with resettled Syrian refugees and address their social, health, and economic needs.⁵

As a surge of refugees is experienced by nations worldwide, many questions of population displacement and relocation are of critical importance. ICTs provide a way to connect across space, time and place, and facilitate the flow of information around priority concerns such as personal safety, education, mental health, abuse/violence, employment, skills/competencies development, and social integration.⁶ Many times, upon arrival at a new destination, refugees are equipped with cellular phones and technological skills.^{7,8} For refugees, ICTs such as mobile devices, are helpful during and after relocation; these ICTs provides the means to stay connected to loved ones, and learn about the destination culture.⁹ There are clear

opportunities to enhance the refugee resettlement and integration experience in a global digital era. Most literature today depicts the role ICTs take in facilitating processes around refugee settlement and access to services. Thus far, research has not adequately studied the role social media technologies have in addressing refugee and settlement issues. For the purpose of this discussion, social media technologies include platforms such as social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Instagram), forums, blogs or micro blogs (e.g. Twitter), and wikis.¹⁰ To date, little is known about how social media contributes to a refugee's inclusion and integration into a destination place, well-being and health, and how it supports the process of resettlement. Therefore, there is a need for research to explore and thoroughly understand the informational practices of newly arriving refugees.¹¹ For example, what are the ways in which refugees seek information? What kind of information are they searching for? What are the kinds of information use behaviors they adopt? What challenges arise? The answers to these questions can support existing resettlement efforts.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this scoping review are to examine social media use behavior of Syrian refugee youth and the potential of social media to provide information that can support their wellbeing, inclusion, and integration in Canada.

METHODS

Key Question:

1. In what context do refugee youth use social media?

Approach: The scoping review

A scoping review is a rapid gathering of literature in a given subject area where the aims are to accumulate as much evidence as possible and map the results. We used a systematic scoping review process. We will follow the Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) scoping review framework which includes (i) identifying the research question; (ii) identifying relevant studies; (iii) selecting studies; (iv) charting data; (v) collating, summarizing, and reporting results.¹² We will also searched documents on IOM and WHO websites related to social media and refugees. We will use the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) approach for systematic reviews.¹⁴ PRISMA includes a checklist and flowchart.

Study criteria

This review will include available qualitative evidence which focuses on social media use behaviours of youth refugees as they interact and integrate with the destination community. The focus of this review is on Syrian refugees, but if no relevant evidence is available, data concerning other refugee youth populations will be considered. Studies must meet the following criteria:

- Population: refugee youth
- Intervention: social media and information and communications technology (ICTs)

- **Outcomes:** integration into host community, increased social connections and networks, access to health and social services resources, access to community information, improved equity considerations

Search strategy

A search strategy will be developed and peer-reviewed by a librarian. To identify relevant publications, we will use search terms refugees, social media, and information sharing. The search will include medical subject heading (MeSH) terms and keywords derived from those terms. The following electronic databases will be searched for qualitative and mixed-methods studies, as well as evidence-based reports and articles: PubMed, Scopus, ProQuest, and Communication Source. The electronic searches will include articles in all languages (i.e. English, French, Mandarin, Spanish etc.), published from December 31 2009 to 2016. We will not limit the search by article type. In addition, we will search websites from several international resources or organizations relevant to refugee health and social services. The literature search results will be uploaded to a reference manager software package to facilitate the study selection process.

Study screening and selection

We will screen articles based on title and abstract relevance. Two review authors will independently assess all the potential studies identified as a result of the search strategy for inclusion. We will resolve any disagreements through discussion or, if required, we will consult a third review author. The full texts of potentially eligible citations will then be retrieved and screened independently in duplicate.

Quality assessment of included studies

We anticipate a variety of types of studies; therefore, we will only conduct quality assessment if we find the majority of studies are in-depth qualitative studies.

Data extraction

We will develop a standardized extraction sheet informed by a framework analysis (framework: A Social Information Model of Media Use in Organizations).¹³ Teams of two reviewers will extract data in duplicate and independently. The two reviewers will compare results and resolve disagreements by discussion or with help from a third reviewer. At a minimum we will extract results as they apply to the framework analysis and study criteria.

Analysis and synthesis

We will use framework analysis using the Social Information Model of Media Use in Organizations¹³ to identify and group ideas of social media use behaviours into over-arching themes. We will also look for and explain outliers.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

We will publish this scoping review in an open access journal such as Journal of Global Health.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no potential conflicts of interest to report.

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