

Migrant Children _

Adapted from Markello, J. Migrant Children in Educating Pediatric Residents to Provide Health Care to Underserved Children, McCarthy, P. (ed) Ambulatory Pediatric Association, McLean, VA 1990.

A. Knowledge

Children of migrant agricultural workers are a distinct, high risk population

Migratory patterns

East coast stream: Florida, Puerto Rico, and Texas migrants to the northeast

Mid-stream: Texas to central U.S.

Western stream: Texas, California, and southwest to all western states

Population

Difficult to quantify number of children given illegal alien status of parents

Estimates of approximately 350,000 children nationwide

75% Hispanic

Poorly educated with few speaking fluent English,

Greater than 35% functionally illiterate

Health care

Under immunized

High prevalence of malnutrition

Delayed dental care

High prevalence of infectious diseases due to inadequate sanitation: diarrhea, parasitic diseases predominate

Tuberculosis (nearly half of adult workers test positive)

Lack of continuity of care

Ignorance re: community resources given constant moves

Child abuse: high risk secondary to stressful life events

High prevalence of chronic illness/handicapped conditions

Mortality 1.6 times higher than in other US children

B. Skills

Environmentally sensitive assessment of family and social milieu

Assessment of diet and risk for malnutrition

Language skills: bilingual education (Spanish)

Ability to work with agencies providing services to migrant workers in difficult, transient, poorly supported social situations

C Attitudes

Respect for lifestyles choice of migrants
Sensitivity to special needs of migrants, especially need for additional supports to ensure compliance
Understanding that non-compliance may be a problem secondary to lifestyle and education

D. Barriers

Lack of consistent care
Lack of trust in health care providers
Poverty associated with high mobility
Lack of insurance
Ethnic/cultural barriers: e.g., faith healers
Lack of child care/transportation
Multiple work related issues
 Lack of job security
 Health care facilities not open when parents can visit
 Poor wages
Lack of consistent education for children

E. Advocacy

Political advocacy to improve services for migrant workers
Support for prioritization of extramural experience for residents caring for migrant children

References

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