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REVIEW

Immigration and work, considerations about the challenges in Brazil: bibliographic review of the literature

Inmigración y trabajo, consideraciones sobre los desafíos en Brasil: revisión bibliográfica de la literatura

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: migratory flows towards countries that have more labor supply are not recent. In this sense, the arrival of immigrants in host countries, in many cases, makes this population more susceptible to health risk situations because of work activities, lack of integration with the local population and the immigration process itself.
Method: the study used a bibliographic review of the literature as a method. In this context, integration policies and the recognition of educational training in the country of origin can contribute to improving the living conditions of this population in Brazil.
Results: in this context, this study aims to provide a summary of the challenges faced by immigrants in search of improved living conditions. Furthermore, this study contributes to identifying the main challenges facing immigrants recently arrived in Brazil and the difficult process of integration into local society. It is observed that the authors highlight in common that, worldwide, in the different receiving countries, regardless of the social, political, and economic context in which the immigrants find themselves, there is some destructive process that conditions the health-disease process of this population, resulting from the various factors mentioned above.
Conclusion: yet the positive contribution of migration to development is increasingly recognized, and these targeted policies will maximize their benefits in both countries of origin and destination.

Keywords: Border Health; Emigration and Immigration; Brazil; Work; Health Vulnerability.

RESUMEN

Introducción: los flujos migratorios hacia países con mayor oferta laboral no son recientes. En este sentido, la llegada de inmigrantes a los países de acogida, en muchos casos, hace que esta población sea más susceptible a situaciones de riesgo para la salud debido a las actividades laborales, la falta de integración con la población local y el propio proceso migratorio.
Método: el estudio utilizó como método una revisión bibliográfica de la literatura. En este contexto, las políticas de integración y el reconocimiento de la formación educativa en el país de origen pueden contribuir a mejorar las condiciones de vida de esta población en Brasil.
Resultados: en este contexto, este estudio pretende ofrecer un resumen de los desafíos que enfrentan los inmigrantes en busca de mejores condiciones de vida. Además, este estudio contribuye a identificar los principales desafíos que enfrentan los inmigrantes recién llegados a Brasil y el difícil proceso de integración a la sociedad local. Se observa que los autores resaltan en común que, a nivel mundial, en los diferentes países receptores, independientemente del contexto social, político y económico en el que se encuentran los inmigrantes, existe algún proceso destructivo que condiciona el proceso salud-enfermedad de estos. población, como resultado de los diversos factores mencionados anteriormente.
Conclusión: sin embargo, se reconoce cada vez más la contribución positiva de la migración al desarrollo, y estas políticas específicas maximizarán sus beneficios tanto en los países de origen como en los de destino.

Palabras clave: Salud Fronteriza; Emigración e Inmigración; Brasil; Trabajar; Vulnerabilidad Sanitaria.

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INTRODUCTION

Migratory flows towards countries that have more labor supply are not recent. In this sense, the arrival of immigrants in host countries, in many cases, makes this population more susceptible to health risk situations because of work activities, lack of integration with the local population and the immigration process itself. A study carried out in the State of North Carolina (United States of America) demonstrated that feelings of marginalization and experiences of discrimination were frequently mentioned by participants and men described falls at work or accidents as their main health concern.[1] Immigration is a stress-inducing phenomenon that requires adjustment of valued activities and negatively affects health.[2]

Worldwide, the immigration process directly affects immigrants arriving in a foreign country. A literature review study carried out in Spain highlighted the main problems faced by immigrants: living in areas of high social risk, difficulties in accessing health services, acceptance of work under worse conditions, communication problems related to language, ethnic-cultural differences, and lack of knowledge of risks and preventive measures at work.[3] The country's employment status may have an impact on perinatal mortality among immigrant groups in Belgium.[4] Another study carried out in Czechia,[5] highlighted that risks in the work environment are a potential social determinant of health, contributing to health inequalities among immigrants. Along the same lines, a study confirmed that people who are lower on the socioeconomic scale are affected by more health problems related to various factors such as manual work with low wages.[6]

It is observed that the authors highlight in common that, worldwide, in the different receiving countries, regardless of the social, political, and economic context in which the immigrants find themselves, there is some destructive process that conditions the health-disease process of this population, resulting from the various factors mentioned above. In this context, this study aims to provide a summary of the challenges faced by immigrants in search of improved living conditions. Furthermore, this study contributes to identifying the main challenges facing immigrants recently arrived in Brazil and the difficult process of integration into local society.

METHOD

The study used a bibliographic review of the literature as a method. According to Gil [7] "the main advantage of bibliographical research lies in the fact that it allows the researcher to cover a much wider range of phenomena than that which could be researched directly ". Thus, this article seeks to identify the main challenges faced by Haitian immigrants in Brazil through a bibliographic review focusing on social vulnerability.

The search for texts was carried out in the database of Latin American and Caribbean literature on health sciences (LILACS), in March 2023. The inclusion criteria were complete articles and originals available online free of charge and in the public domain in Portuguese, Spanish or English without considering a time frame. Articles that do not have an abstract indexed in the database and that do not address the following topic were not selected: Haitian immigration in Brazil, health, and work. Thematic groups were constructed where the textual discourses present certain similarities. Obligations regarding copyright and research ethics were respected. Considering that the chosen method (bibliographical research) uses only public domain data, it was not necessary to submit it for consideration by a Research Ethics committee. 36 published works were found that address the topic of Haitian immigration in Brazil, of which 13 were included. The selected articles were read in full and completed using Microsoft Word 2020 with its own instrument. After this stage, the data were grouped in a table containing the following information: reference, identification number, abstract, institution of origin of the authors, place of study, country where it was published, year, objectives, methodology and main results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social vulnerability and immigration

Forced immigration resulting from factors such as natural disasters, political and economic instability, leaves immigrants in risky situations, both in the process of entry and integration into the society of the receiving country with different aspects, whether cultural, organizational or others. These factors leave immigrants in a situation of social and economic vulnerability, in many cases they carry out work activities that are harmful to their health. According to Lopes,[8] "immigrants, despite their active behavior [...], are treated as passive subjects, dependent on social assistance and without decision-making power ". A study carried identified that economic vulnerability together with poor working conditions has direct effects on the health of this population.[9]

Relating the issue of social vulnerability of the immigrant population allows us to demonstrate that the risk situations in which immigrants live facilitate the increase in processes destructive to health in this population. In many cases, diseases neglected by the health system of the receiving country have a higher incidence in this population. Golberg et al.[10] reported the main diseases that affected the Bolivian immigrant population in both São Paulo and Argentina were tuberculosis, sociability problems, alcoholism, among others. Diseases in populations where social vulnerability is present tend to be diseases neglected by the State and the very way of life of this population favors the persistence of these diseases whose eradication measures require joint work from various sectors, from the very organization of society and the means of production. According to Breilh,[10] [...], "the way of life of a social group does not obey only its own history, but is also related to the broader or general history of society and, in turn, Once again, the way of life is not only expressed in people's lifestyles and in their daily lives, but it is also expressed in the processes that occur in their bodies".

According to a study carried out by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Brazil, most immigrants tend to go to work in the south of Brazil, mainly in the intensive construction and meat processing industries, and difficult living conditions constituted the first obstacle to integrate the formal labor market.[11]

In this context, the presence of Haitian immigrants in Brazil is part of a process of forced immigration resulting from factors such

as: natural disasters that put lives at imminent risk, political and economic instability, and social vulnerability present in the country of origin. When settling in Brazil, this population encounters difficulties in different aspects, whether in integration into local society, in the work activities carried out and issues related to the problems that already exist in Brazilian society, such as racism. These issues raised place this population in situations of social vulnerability in the main Brazilian cities whose presence is numerous.

Leão et al.[12] in a study carried out in Mato Grosso identified the fragility of the social insertion of Haitian immigrants who expressed themselves both in unemployment and in work activities whose presence is numerous in high-risk areas where production processes have considerable socio-environmental impact on the health of this population. Breilh[10] states that, "the work process [...] has a considerable impact on the configuration of the way of life and, when it acquires destructive facets or forms, it usually causes profound negative changes in health [. ..]".

Immigration and factors associated with the health-disease process

Immigrants experience more problems such as depression, anxiety and somatic disorders, pathologies directly related to the migration process and the stress suffered.[13] In the case of international immigration, the social and economic vulnerabilities of newcomers in a foreign country force them to undertake jobs that pose greater health risks.[14] When thinking about the immigrant population, whether transitional or border, there are several structural and individual factors that are unfavorable to health. The immigration process, in most cases, is difficult due to a series of conditions such as: the disruption of the living context and the precarious conditions found in the receiving country. Guerra Ventura[15] emphasized in their study the characteristics of the migrant population and the health system in force in the receiving country, which can increase the vulnerability of these subjects.

These aspects of vulnerability faced by part of the immigrant population in Brazil can be derived from factors at different levels. The erroneous interpretation of these laws that guarantee the right to health for immigrants, especially in Brazilian border cities, do not go in common with the right enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution. Along the same lines, Barreto[16] in their study, emphasized the different difficulties ranging from the interpretation of constitutional laws by health managers, to financial and organizational problems that hinder access to healthcare for immigrants in border cities with the Mercosur countries.

Another factor that can aggravate the vulnerability of immigrants is the economic aspect, such as the underutilization of professional skills or the high unemployment rate in the formal job market. Finally, the social factor has a great weight when it comes to access to health services by immigrants, such as insufficient knowledge of the language or the functioning of institutional systems, which constitute barriers for this population.[17] The different discussions about the challenges encountered by immigrants in Brazil when accessing health services make it clear that health policies, despite various advances, still face difficulties in including all population characteristics in planning health actions towards achieving the direct access to universal health defended in the Constitution. Brazil is a country of considerable size, and the Unified Health System (SUS) faces organizational, financial, and service decentralization difficulties.

These aspects make it difficult for both native and immigrant populations to have equal access to healthcare in all Brazilian federative entities. On the other hand, one must think about the basis of the capitalist system, which is based on the accumulation of capital. Seeing the other side of discussions about the problems faced by social policies in the current capitalist system allows us to debate the problem more broadly. Throughout the implementation of the current capitalist system, social policies were created to camouflage the real problems that create this system. Health policies that fit into the social security model face problems that arise from the current system. The health sector awakens several interests of the capitalist market in Brazil, and the governments elected by the people defend the interests of the dominant class, in this sense, health policies tend to move in the direction chosen by the dominant class and the privatization of health services has been advocated by groups that go against the Health Reform.

These problems have a major impact on access to health services by the population, when thinking about the social classes with greater vulnerabilities, which in many cases include immigrants, these impacts tend to worsen over the years considering the various difficulties of order economic situation that Brazil has suffered in recent years. Another important issue is the social vulnerability of certain groups of recently arrived immigrants. There are several difficulties that can hinder access to health services, the authors refer to the economic situation as a complicating factor in achieving full coverage for both the Brazilian and foreign population of the health services offered by the Unified Health System (SUS). David et al.[18], states that among the various difficulties in economic and administrative terms that make it difficult to meet the health needs of the Haitian immigrant population, are the following: the language, the work routine of immigrants, the opening hours of health care units, health, immigrants' lack of knowledge about the functioning of the Unified Health System (SUS), among others.

Considering this context, the issue of social vulnerability needs to be conceptualized from different perspectives to understand it. Initially, it must be considered as a direct consequence of a group of people, considering several aspects (gender, age, level of education, among others). Next, it is the connection of migrants' vulnerability to structural causes (living and working conditions, health-disease process, among others).

Immigrants in Brazil: rights and duties

In Brazil, according to the Federal Audit Court (TCU), immigration control is carried out by a set of state bodies. The main bodies involved, and their functions depend on the union budget and their respective ministries.[19]

The Federal Police operates at the border, ports and airports, with the aim of ensuring that the entry of people into national territory occurs within the conditions established by law; and, indirectly, through a set of internal control mechanisms for work, residence, study and others, with repercussions on the immigration flow.[20] The main federal bodies involved in immigration policy, in addition to the Federal Police, are the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Labor, including the National Immigration

Council and the National Committee for Refugees.[21]

Considering the vulnerable conditions of many immigrant groups, the right to health is a decisive factor in reducing the risks that tend to worsen health. In Brazil, in relation to access to health, the Federal Constitution of 1988 (art. 198) and the Organic Health Law of 1990 (art. 2, caput, and art. 7, item I) guarantee all people under jurisdiction Brazilian country has the right to access the services of the Unified Health System.[22] Particularly, in relation to immigrants entering Brazilian territory, two national laws were in force: Law 6815 of 1980 (Foreigner Statute) until November 2017 and Law 13 445 of 2017 (Migration Law) which establishes: "Art. 4th. Migrants are guaranteed in the national territory, on equal terms with nationals, the inviolability of the right to life, liberty, equality, security, and property, as well as being assured:(…) VIII – access to public health services, health and social assistance and social security, in accordance with the law, without discrimination based on nationality and migratory status;(...)".[22]

Both offer guarantees of access to healthcare for the immigrant population in the country. If the legal provisions of the revoked Statute required a systematic interpretation with the constitutional norms to reach the conclusion of guaranteeing the right of access to health for immigrants in Brazil, the new Migration Law advanced the issue, establishing an express provision in which it is found such guarantee is provided.

The case of Haitian immigration in Brazil

Considering the current panorama of developing countries, Brazil has been one of the destinations sought after by international immigrants seeking work opportunities. In relation to Haitian immigration in Brazil, the migratory flow was marked by the irregular entry of Haitians into Brazilian territory. The migratory route they adopted started from the country's capital, Port-au-Prince, passing through South American countries, such as Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia. Another contingent, significantly smaller, entered Brazil by air, arriving in cities such as Brasília, Belo Horizonte, and São Paulo.[23]

Cavalcanti et al.[24] highlighted that as of 2017, 11 % more licenses were issued to workers from the immigrant population in Brazil, and the majority (31 %) were issued to Haitian immigrants who entered the job market in Brazil in the same year.

The wave of Haitian immigration in Brazil generated major challenges in relation to the human rights of this population. Cavalcanti et al.[24] reported that in Brazil the main economic activities that include Haitian workers are construction of buildings, slaughterhouses (slaughtering birds pigs), restaurants and similar. Haitian immigrants recently arrived in Brazil, in many cases, perform manual labor, are unaware of labor rights, and are exploited by their employers.

Figure 1. Migratory routes of Haitians to Brazil
Source: Duval Fernandes and Maria da Consolação G. de Castro (2014)

International migration creates a challenge for the Brazilian government in relation to guaranteeing the rights of immigrants. In many cases, the immigrant population finds itself in a vulnerable situation due to a series of factors. In the context of intense human mobility, Granada et al.[25] indicated that the problem of socioeconomic inequalities marks the daily experience of a large part of immigrants in accessing work, housing, education, and adequate environmental conditions, as well as sanitary and psychosocial conditions. When settling in Brazil, Haitians still encounter many obstacles, the first of which is the Portuguese language.[26] Thus, Haitian immigrants are faced with several problems in relation to guaranteeing their rights, creating a challenge for the Brazilian government to guarantee these rights established by law. According to Baeninger,[27] the illegal entry of Haitian immigrants into Brazilian borders revealed the difficulties in accessing a visa at the Brazilian Embassy in Haiti.

For instance, there is a great presence of Haitian immigration in Western Paraná/Brazil. The migration of Haitians to western Paraná began in 2010, stimulated by the offer of jobs in the region's meatpacking industries. Attracted by job offers, Haitian immigrants who arrived in western Paraná concentrated in the cities of Cascavel because of their insertion into the formal job market in the region's main meatpacking plants.[28] These meat processing plants invariably constitute the first place of work for the adult immigrant population. Haitian immigrants arriving in Western Paraná face several difficulties, even with stability in the formal job market, such as obligations to family members left in the country of origin who need monthly support, their own maintenance in the country such as renting housing and other aspects.[30] When faced with these difficulties, many immigrants consider their stay in the region to be brief, hoping to look for other places with better conditions.[31]

As discussed above, the settlement of Haitian immigrants in Western Paraná was due to the supply of work offered by the meat processing industries, on the other hand, they experience several difficulties in integrating into society. Souza[32] emphasized the precariousness of work as difficulties faced by Haitian immigrants and the sectors that most employ these immigrants are construction, slaughterhouses, and service provision. From the immigration process itself, added to the trauma left by the 2010 earthquake in the country of origin, in addition to integration challenges, access to better working conditions and discrimination suffered when settling in Brazil. According to Souza et al,[32] the lack of time for physical activities, difficulties in integrating into local society, feelings of sadness generated by the lack of family members left in the home country have a direct impact on the health-disease process among immigrants.

CONCLUSION

In the context of migratory flows in the recent era, several authors point out that international migrations are caused by several factors, mainly socioeconomic and environmental issues, among others, generating migratory flows of labor towards countries where industrial hubs are concentrated. Upon arriving in receiving countries, many sectors exploit this workforce to expand and increase their profits. On the other hand, the country of origin of these immigrants benefits from remittances that help their economies and the immigrant himself hopes to achieve a better standard of living. These workers suffer from precarious working conditions, lack of social policies, lack of integration, attacks such as xenophobia, racism, among others. In many cases, they face barriers to accessing education and their participation in the construction and integration of society is limited.

In this context, integration policies and the recognition of educational training in the country of origin can contribute to improving the living conditions of this population in Brazil. Yet the positive contribution of migration to development is increasingly recognized, and these targeted policies will maximize their benefits in both countries of origin and destination. Therefore, the need for an approach in which migration is an integral part of countries' development strategies emerges.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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