

Review of: "Impact of Men's Labour Migration on Non-migrating Spouses' Health: A Systematic Review"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This a well-written systematic review and an interesting topic on health-related impacts of spousal migration on left-behind women.

Below are some notes for authors.

1. The review is about health impact. I would suggest this should be mentioned in the title.
2. The aim of the systematic review is not to examine. It is to review or to synthesise evidence from previous studies.
3. The main findings of the review are impacts on mental health, physical health, accessibility, and sexual and reproductive health. These findings should be mentioned in the abstract as well as in the conclusion but wording differently. The current finding in the abstract only covers some findings from access to healthcare services and mental health.
4. Article screening and selection section.
 - The authors need to provide reasons why the inclusion criteria start from 2005?
 - Article screening and selection section. "Therefore, we made the decision to focus only on health impacts on left-behind women in this manuscript." I do not think this sentence should be here or delete it. In screening section, the authors may need to explain more about the process in which how individual articles meet inclusion criteria or not. This can be referred to figure 1. Also, the authors may also explain how decision was made when there was uncertainty on the articles.
5. In the methods, the authors need to mention when the search for database was conducted.
6. The key words in database search section are 'migration', 'left-behind' and 'wives/partners/ women/spouses',. Did the authors use Boolean terms (OR, AND)?. If yes, the authors need to explain that. Also, I suggest to not add key words in the abstract.
7. Mental health section:
 - Mental health section. **Malik and Aftab's** qualitative study in Pakistan found that women worried about the condition of their husbands abroad and reported feeling insecure and unsafe in their homes in the absence of a man (**Malik & Aftab**, 2015). Although one is citation, but it seems a repetition of the authors' name. To avoid repetition I would suggest to directly cite **Malik & Aftab (2015)** found that..... **OR** A qualitative study in Pakistan found that women

worried about the condition of their husbands abroad and reported feeling insecure and unsafe in their homes in the absence of a man (Malik & Aftab, 2015).

- Same as above. Mental health section. **Huang et al.** in their cross-sectional study elaborated that women who experienced prolonged stress and loneliness, may be hesitant to communicate and form effective social relationships (**Huang et al.**, 2018)
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- 8. Physical health section:
- Same as above. Physical health section. In a longitudinal analysis of an Indonesian dataset, **Lu** found that left-behind adults (including left-behind women) had 37% more odds of experiencing hypertension (**Lu**, 2012).
- Physical health section. **Ali et al.** found that the incidence of chronic and other diseases was higher among non-migrant wives compared to migrant wives in a cross-sectional study in India (**Ali et al.**, 2017).... To avoid repetition this could be written "A cross-sectional study in India found that the incidence of chronic and other diseases was higher among non-migrant wives compared to migrant wives.
- Physical health section. Same as above. Based on a panel survey in India, **Lei and Desai** elaborated that for women in nuclear families, the negative health effect on the physical health of migrant wives was partially suppressed by women's increased autonomy (**Lei & Desai**, 2021).
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- 9. Other health-related issues section
- Repetition. Same as above. "**Agadjanian et al.** studied mortality among migrant and non-migrant wives in Mozambique (Agadjanian et al., 2021)". May just write or cite like this **Agadjanian et al.**, (2021) argued that.....
- Repetition. "**Thapa et al.**'s study among women in Nepal concluded that migrant wives were significantly more likely to smoke in comparison to non-migrant wives, and while alcohol consumption was significantly higher among non-migrant wives, it was increasing among migrant wives (**Thapa et al.**, 2019)."
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- 10. Discussion section
- "The major themes that emerged included: mental health; physical health; access to healthcare; and sexual and reproductive health (family planning/ STIs)". There are 5 findings. However, in the discussion, there are only 4 findings discussed. I do not think section 3.5 is needed in the findings.
- "compartmented" typo...
- Repetition. Similar to our findings on sexual and reproductive health, a review on health of migrants in Nepal by **Simkhada et al.** found that left-behind women were at high risk of STIs due to unsafe sexual behaviour of their husbands and due to gender inequality pervasive in patriarchal Nepal, many women could not negotiate safe sex (using condoms) with husbands despite the desire (**Simkhada et al.**, 2017). Similarly, **Fernández-Sánchez et al.** found that migrant wives were less likely to use contraceptives, less likely to discuss family planning with their husbands and were also prone to STIs (**Fernández-Sánchez et al.**, 2020).
- Repetition: **Jain and Jayaram** (2022) found in their study that women whose migrant husbands didn't earn enough worked hard in farms to increase output and tried to earn additional cash through waged labour (**Jain & Jayaram**,

2022)

- Repetition: **Singh** (2020) in his study found that even women who lived in joint families complained of increased work burden (**Singh**, 2020).
- Repetition: Similar to our findings, **Singh** (2020) found that disrespectful behaviour from in-laws/relatives, including domestic and sexual violence negatively affected the mental health of migrant wives (**Singh**, 2020).
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- 11. Future research section
- Future research: “Although, mental health and sexual and reproductive health among left-behind ‘has’ been explored to some extent.... “ Delete coma and use ‘have’
- Future research section: it is mentioned that “While including grey literature.....” the authors need to explain how many grey literature used, what kind of grey literature, how you get them
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- 12. Abstract and conclusion: International migration is in an increasing trend globally; internal migration is also very common, particularly in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs). Meanwhile in the conclusion “Existing studies clearly indicate that there are physical, mental and reproductive health implications for non-migrating spouses of international labour migrants. I think it should be clear whether the study is only about international migration or also include internal migration.