

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

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Review

The authors undertake a systematic review to comment on the impact of labor migration of men on the health of their non-migrant spouses. By doing so, the authors address an important aspect in the migration literature that is often overlooked. The paper presents many interesting insights which can help a reader be updated about the topic and the challenges facing non-migrant married women.

The authors can consider the following points to improve their paper

1. The authors have generally used the term 'left-behind' to characterize the non-migrant women, which robs them of their autonomy. A term commonly used in the literature – women who 'stay behind' could be referred to instead. It would be crucial to understand how / if the health of the women who are left behind differ from those who stay behind.
2. The authors focus on studies based on LMIC. Is it based on the World Bank definition? It would be good to mention.
3. The authors could add a small justification for the choice of the years '2005 to September 2022'. This would help the readers understand the significance of the time period and if there were any prior hypothesis regarding the findings. What are the periods of studies [Can be linked to Table 1]? Did COVID-19 impact the health of non-migrant wives further or is it not possible to comment from the chosen studies? Were newer insights found in more recent studies that were not observed before?
4. The authors specify in the Section on Database search, that they use 'migration', 'left-behind', but it would be important to mention if the 493 studies that they started with, include internal, international migration or both. Would a keyword search of international migration be more relevant in this case? It would be good to mention if the authors intend to look at internal or international, short-term or long-term migration while motivating the research question.
5. Did the authors use 'left behind' as well or just with the hyphen? Perhaps the authors checked with both and the results remained the same, it would still be useful to mention all the cases that were considered. Would that alter the results? Would adding 'stay behind' result in more published papers that are not included at present?
6. Inclusion criteria should mention that only English articles are included in the analysis. It can be removed later on from the potential limitation (under Future research) section.
7. Rather than including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method survey as 'empirical' it would be better to keep them separately for ease of understanding.
8. The finding section is very interesting, but it presents multiple insights from the papers. The authors can consider

creating a conceptual framework based on the findings to ease the reader's understanding. It could provide a better structure to report the findings

1. For example, for section 3.1, the authors can consider untangling the experience of wives' physical and mental health, by family structure (nuclear, joint), age (young, old), presence of children, social norms and cultural beliefs, ownership of house, frequency and amount of remittances, frequency of communicating with the migrant husbands, and so on. Following which the authors can say how the studies addressed each of the strands, and highlight the overlaps.
 2. This framework would help in framing the next sections, for example, how does remittance affect healthcare-seeking behavior?
9. The authors could also discuss the conditions in which autonomy of women increases – is it when they belong to a nuclear family? Does decision-making power always have a positive effect on women's mental health? It would be important to consider the indirect linkage of wives' decision-making stress on mental health. If these points are not discussed in any of the papers that were selected, it would be good to include them in the discussion section. The authors can take inspiration for discussion from the following studies and discuss whether these features are also likely to affect women in international-migration context:
1. Rashid, S. R. (2013). Bangladeshi Women's Experiences of Their Men's Migration Rethinking Power , Agency , and Subordination. *Asian Survey*, 53(5), 883–908.
Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/as.2013.53.5.883>
 2. Roy, A. K., & Nangia, P. (2005). Impact of male out-migration on health status of left behind wives- A study of Bihar, India. In *Meeting of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population* (pp. 1–22). Retrieved from <http://iussp2005.princeton.edu/papers/51906>
10. The future research directions is an interesting section to read, but the section could be better linked to the Findings and Discussion sections.

Overall, it is an interesting read and I really enjoyed reading the paper.