

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

Weizhen Dong<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Waterloo

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

This literature synthesis study tackles an interesting and important topic in the study of migration and immigration: male labour migration's impact on their left-behind spouses' health.

While the authors have made great efforts in searching, filtering, assessing, and reviewing the relevant literature items, there are some major shortcomings, which resulted the current version of the manuscript lack of significance in the area of study.

Firstly, the paper mentioned both domestic and international migration, but its analysis and discussions treated them as one category. Is there any difference between the two types of migration in terms of labour migration's impact on their left-behind wives' health? Or, is this study actually only included domestic migration studies? This needs to be made very clear for such a study.

Secondly, the paper's findings were not clearly presented. It blended positive and negative outcomes together and without clear reasons. It is important to show the readers which settings' studies found positive health outcomes and WHY. However, the paper didn't state important study settings at times as well. For example, a positive policy (encourage family migration) was mentioned, but there was no mention of the study setting by name. The most obvious miss is "China" in the paper, since quite a number of studies included were carried out in China, according to the "Summary of reviewed studies" table; but "China" was never mentioned in the paper's analysis or discussion.

Thirdly, the review analysis didn't include the study settings' socioeconomic background in its synthesis. There are differences in culture, tradition, and societal factors among these studies' countries, although they are under the same label as the "LMICs". Thus, it's important to identify where is more likely to have what health outcomes among the left-behind women and the relevant elements in the setting/society, and what are the potential supporting mechanisms that can improve the non-migrant spouses' health status - as findings and the meaningfulness of this work.