

## **POLISH WOMEN IMMIGRANTS VS UTILIZATION AND ATTITUDES TO GYNECOLOGICAL PREVENTIVE CARE IN SWEDEN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Migrant use of available Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services may differ from the host population. The health sector of the host country may not be sufficiently prepared to provide the necessary information and assistance for migrants (Cör, 2019). This presentation was based on an ethnographic pilot study from 2022, reflecting on thirteen semi-structured interviews conducted with Polish women aged 25 to 45 living in Stockholm. The study analyzed the accessibility and barriers faced by Polish immigrants in public gynecological care in Sweden and sought to explain their attitudes and frequency of gynecological visits. In particular, the study interrogated knowledge about basic gynecological topics such as Pap and HPV tests, alongside HPV infections and vaccinations. The study identified several barriers for Polish women to become full, equal participants of Swedish gynecological healthcare. These barriers included an underlying lack of understanding of how Swedish gynecological care works, problems in finding specialist care, an insufficient number of specialists, a lack of information in English or Polish, and a limited knowledge among study participants about HPV tests and vaccinations. Adaptation to the Swedish SRH system was strongly tied to participants level of trust in it. The study showed that trust is influenced by women first experiences with health care in Sweden, health literacy, experiences with the Polish private gynecological system, and the attitudes of partners and family with Swedish backgrounds or long term experiences in Sweden. This study may constitute the basis for a broader discussion about migrants' sexual health and access to public health.

### **Keywords:**

HPV, Sexual and reproductive health, Polish immigrants, Swedish gynecological services, cytology, Pap test, HPV vaccination, women's health