

Health-related Information campaigns for Sinophone women in Italy: methods and approaches

Sabrina Ardizzoni
(University for Foreigners of Siena)

Keywords: Inclusive healthcare; Chinese patients; pregnancy; health communication; Sinophone migrants

Migrant women are highly vulnerable and under-represented in the public health discourse, especially during pregnancy, when they are positioned at the centre of various intergenerational and multidirectional cultural drives, such as personal relation with their cultures of origin, social integration in local communities, connection with members of their own ethnic group in the territory of emigration, and national immigration policies (Phillimore 2015; Piacentini et alii 2018).

In Italy, according to the official data, in 2023 there were 284,525 Chinese nationals living in the country, (ISTAT Report Jan. 1, 2023; Oct. 17, 2023), a migrant community still scarcely proficient in Italian. The inclusion of Chinese-speaking women in public health service requires that health institutions adopt various methods for overcoming the language barrier, such as using professional or ad hoc interpreters, on-site or remote interpreting (Azarmina & Wallace 2005 and Bischoff & Grossmann 2006); in some cases, there is an attention to cross-cultural communication, without recourse to an intermediary. Previous studies demonstrated that a common practice in Italy is to provide Italian-Chinese translation services (Curi et alii 2020), but also information campaigns are held in Chinese, online, or on paper provided by hospitals and clinics. The intention of this contribution is, on one side, to offer an overview on the actions taken by the local health institutions in order to reach Chinese migrant women in Italy; on the patients' side, to investigate which devices are most favourably perceived by patients and their families, and can thus be considered as most successful in raising their health literacy information and enable them to access public health services. I am carrying on this empirical research, in the perspective of answering the following questions: how do Italian healthcare institutions implement public health discourse when addressing Chinese women? Which communication channels are they employing? What is the reception of these efforts on the part of Chinese-speaking women? Within the interplay of culture, communication and care (e.g. Kleinman et al. 1978), I am conducting qualitative research based on an interdisciplinary approach, tackling different disciplines, mainly socio-linguistic, within an anthropological and ethno-medical perspective. From an analysis of the translated materials available online, the recordings of doctor-patient interactions, and the interview of approximately 60 significant informers (health-care service operators, mediators, and young women of Chinese origin), I will attempt to highlight what inclusive and exclusionary health practices are enacted by the Italian healthcare system.

This publication was produced with the co-funding of the European Union – Next Generation EU, in the context of The National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Investment 1.5 Ecosystems of Innovation, Project Tuscany Health Ecosystem (THE ECS00000017. Spoke 3)

References

Baum, E., Zhang, D.G., Chee, L.P.Y. and Guo, S.X. (2022), Health and Medicine. In: Kehoe, S. and Wielander, G. (eds.) *Cultural China 2021: e Contemporary China Centre Review*. Pp. 9–23. London: University of Westminster Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16997/book69.b>. License: CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0

Curi, F., Fasano, P., Gentilucci, G., Santandrea, G. (2020), *La mediazione interculturale. Strumento per le politiche di inclusione e di contrasto alle diseguaglianze* [Intercultural mediation. Tool for inclusion and inequality policies]. Bologna: Bononia University Press.

Napier et al. (2014), Culture and Health. *Lancet* 2014; 384: 1607–39.

Phillimore, J. (2015), Delivering maternity services in an era of superdiversity: The challenges of novelty and newness. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(4), 568–582.

Piacentini, T., O'Donnell, C., Phipps, A., Jackson & Stack. (2018), Moving beyond the 'language problem': developing an understanding of the intersections of health, language and immigration status in interpreter-mediated health encounters. *Language and Intercultural Communication*. DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2018.1486409.

Teng, W., Crezee, I. (2022), *Translation Theories in the Context of the Chinese Language – How Applicable are they to Community Translation?* *New Voices in Translation Studies*, vol. 26: 110 – 35.

Wadensjö, C. 2013[1998], *Interpreting as Interaction*. London and New York: Routledge.