Title
Syrian refugees and digital health in Lebanon: opportunities for improving antenatal health through community radio

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Abstract
In the context of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, the country’s Crisis Response Plan prioritizes the improvement of refugee access to primary healthcare services, including outreach and health education. Access and utilization of antenatal care (ANC) services presents a particular challenge. Aiming to contextualize the use of technology with the health beliefs, health experiences, and social and health networks of refugees, we firstly explored the feasibility and acceptability of incorporating digital technology into antenatal health promotion for Syrian refugees in rural Lebanon, then used data from the exploratory phase to inform the design of an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) intervention. Components of the latter were then piloted. We conducted focus groups with 59 refugee women living in informal settlements in rural Lebanon and identified high utilization of smartphones and a number of considerations to be taken into account in the design of refugee ANC technologies, including: refugee health beliefs and experiences, literacy levels, refugee perceptions of negative attitudes of healthcare providers, and hierarchal and familial structures. These were then used as the empirical basis for the design of a digital intervention that responds not only to the need to improve access to antenatal care services but to potentially influence refugee agency. We piloted components of a refugee-run community radio show, facilitated through synchronous IVR to promote antenatal health. These were found to influence community agency, community dynamics and healthcare provider/refugee relationships. Through improving mutual trust and healthcare provider understanding, community radio has the potential to promote health and improve healthcare utilization by this marginalized community.