

**Economic crisis, cutbacks and migrants' access to healthcare in Spain: health workers' perspective**

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## Background

During the economic crisis Spain reduced its public health expenditure by 18.8% and limited the rights to healthcare for undocumented migrants (RDL16/2012) which Catalonia mitigated (Instruction10/2012). The objective is to analyze changes in migrants' access to healthcare in the context of the economic crisis from the health workers' perspective.

## Methods

Qualitative descriptive and interpretative study performed in two areas in Catalonia (Nov.2014-Mar.2015) based on individual interviews with a theoretical sample of primary and secondary care professionals and administrative staff. Thematic analysis segmented by areas and informants was carried out. Data quality was ensured through triangulation of informants and analysts.

## Results

All informant groups reported changes in access not only to the health system but also to the care continuum and responsiveness, despite considering that even those without entitlements received care when needed. However, they signal an increase in bureaucracy due to the restrictions introduced in the entitlements to care that hinder entry to the system. Regarding access to care, they identified an increase in waiting times for secondary and emergency care, affecting all patients but especially migrants; this was attributed to changes in entitlements and those introduced to reduce costs: reductions in resources (beds; staff) and organizational changes (worsening employment conditions and increased process standardizations and justifications for prescribing). A decrease in health services utilization due to inability to afford public transport in rural areas, the co-payments of medicines and to access services during working hours, which they related to migrants' worsening socioeconomic conditions was also reported.

## Conclusions

Health workers identified increasing barriers to the entry and to access the continuum of care that especially affect migrant patients, which they directly related to policy decisions made. Funding: FIS (PI13/00261)

## Key messages

- Health workers perceive that restrictions on entitlements to care negatively impact the entry to the health system and access to the continuum of care
- Health workers perceive that healthcare cutbacks have increased barriers of access to the continuum of care and responsiveness, which specially affect migrants