

Access to Healthcare Services for Central Asian Migrants in Russia during COVID-19

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Research focus

- ✓ 2014 Explore how labor migrants create their own infrastructure in the host city
- ✓ 2015 - 2017 Identify the barriers the migrants face in access to 2017 medical care in Moscow and their coping strategies
- ✓ 2016 Explore the phenomenon of ethnic medicine which became a part of the healthcare solution tailored for labor migrants in Russia
- ✓ 2018 Legal uncertainty and biopolitics in Russia (on the example of migrants' access to healthcare)





Migrants in Russia

10 mln+ labor migrants, at least 2 mln are irregular (Migration service)

40% from Central Asian visa-free countries

Visa-free but no social entitlements

Russian language, shared heritage, similar institutional practices

No migrant ghettos, tend to live close to where they work
(Demintseva, Peshkova 2014)

A large percent of migrants come from villages or rural suburbs

20% of Central Asian migrants are females and their share keeps growing
(Migration Service of Russia)



Barriers to accessing healthcare in Russia

Low awareness on affordable healthcare facilities in Moscow

Unpredictable prices

Almost no health insurance

failure to comply with labor rights: sick leave, holidays

Discrimination in state clinics

Bureaucracy

Language barrier

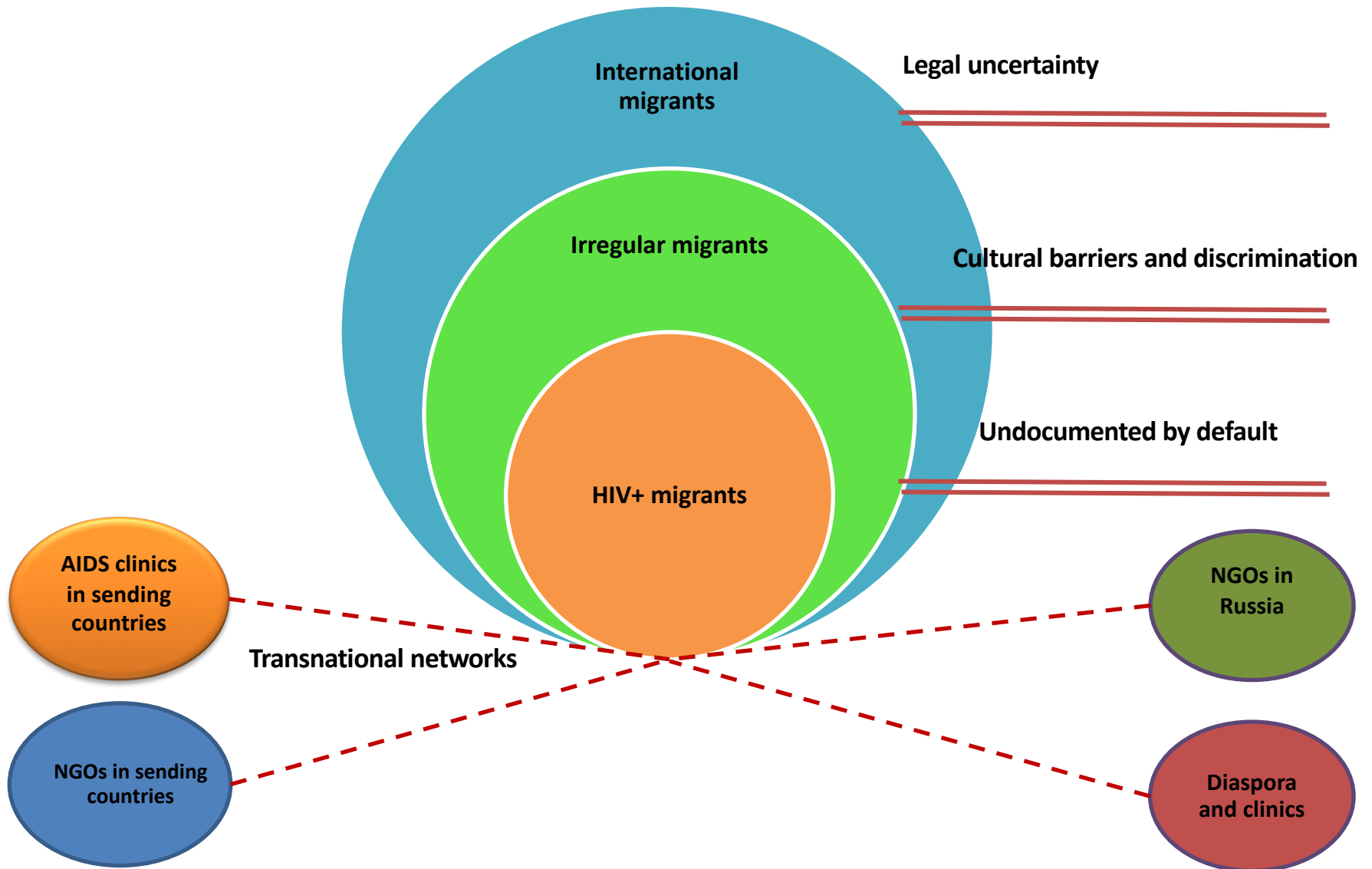
Extra burden on female migrants:
isolation, no viable solution for reproductive health and prenatal care, extra vulnerability in their own community: partner, relatives

Coping strategies

- **“The healthy migrant”**: Ignoring or delaying treatment (alleviating pain with pain killers, coming for the first pregnancy checkup in the second or third trimester) and Seeking non-professional medical care among friends, doctors who are out of practice and pharmacists
- **Basic emergency care**: ambulance, limited hospital care
- **Private outpatient clinics**:
“Kyrgyz clinics”: better price, better understanding,
- **Leaving Russia** — traumatism, chronic diseases, little knowledge about available care



HIV positive migrants among other international migrants



HIV positive migrants in Russia

- Migrants who were tested positively on HIV and receiving ART prior to migration
- Migrants who were tested positively on HIV in Russia – their names reported to migration authorities
- Migrants who were tested positively on HIV anonymously
- The problem of Deportation Prisons

How COVID-19 affected access to care

- COVID-19 seriously affected the transnational network of solidarity in access to healthcare
- COVID-19 affected the ability of migrants to return
- Stigma and discrimination
- “Undesirable stay” and deportation are currently suspended – not applied to international migrants
- COVID-19 is emergency care hence available to all migrants, including undocumented

Solutions of civil society

- Online COVID-clinic for migrants
- New projects designed for migrants are currently emerging – MSF, Elton John Foundation – an important drop in the sea
- Solutions for women and key populations are highly demanded