

# Access to and interventions to improve maternity care services for immigrant women: a narrative synthesis systematic review

Gina MA Higginbottom,<sup>1\*</sup> Catrin Evans,<sup>1</sup>  
Myfanwy Morgan,<sup>2</sup> Kuldip K Bharj,<sup>3</sup>  
Jeanette Eldridge,<sup>1</sup> Basharat Hussain<sup>1</sup> and Karen Salt<sup>1,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Queen's Medical Centre,  
University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine,  
King's College London, London, UK

<sup>3</sup>Division of Midwifery, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>4</sup>Centre for Research into Race and Rights, University of Nottingham,  
Nottingham, UK

\*Corresponding author [gawoko@hotmail.com](mailto:gawoko@hotmail.com) and [ntagh2@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ntagh2@nottingham.ac.uk)

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## Plain English summary

### Maternity care for immigrant women: systematic review

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## Plain English summary

The UK is a first-choice destination country for many immigrants. In the UK, 28.2% of births are to foreign-born women. However, research shows that immigrant women often receive poor maternity care and that there are higher death rates among both mothers and babies depending on country of origin. Our systematic review combined findings from all types of research concerning maternity care for immigrant women. We wanted to find out how immigrant women find and use maternity care services and how this care might be improved.

A research librarian helped to develop the search strategies used to identify the papers we included. We applied exclusion and inclusion criteria and found 40 papers. We used a 'narrative synthesis' approach, which means that we systematically reviewed and analysed the findings in the research studies that we included. We brought together different types of research by different researchers on the same topic. We then looked at the findings to find similar themes in each of our included studies. We used reliable tools to assess the quality of these findings. All of the review steps involved two or more team members.

We organised the findings of our review into five key points about immigrant women and their maternity care:

1. their access to and their use of maternity care services
2. the relationships between immigrant women and health-care professionals (HCPs)
3. communication challenges women experienced
4. the organisation of maternity care services for immigrant women and their legal entitlements
5. discrimination, racism and other similar barriers to their maternity care.

Our results showed that immigrant women have mixed experiences with their maternity care. Few specific services that exist to improve their care have been developed and scientifically evaluated. English-language fluency was a major factor in their satisfaction with care and with the quality of their relationships with HCPs.

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