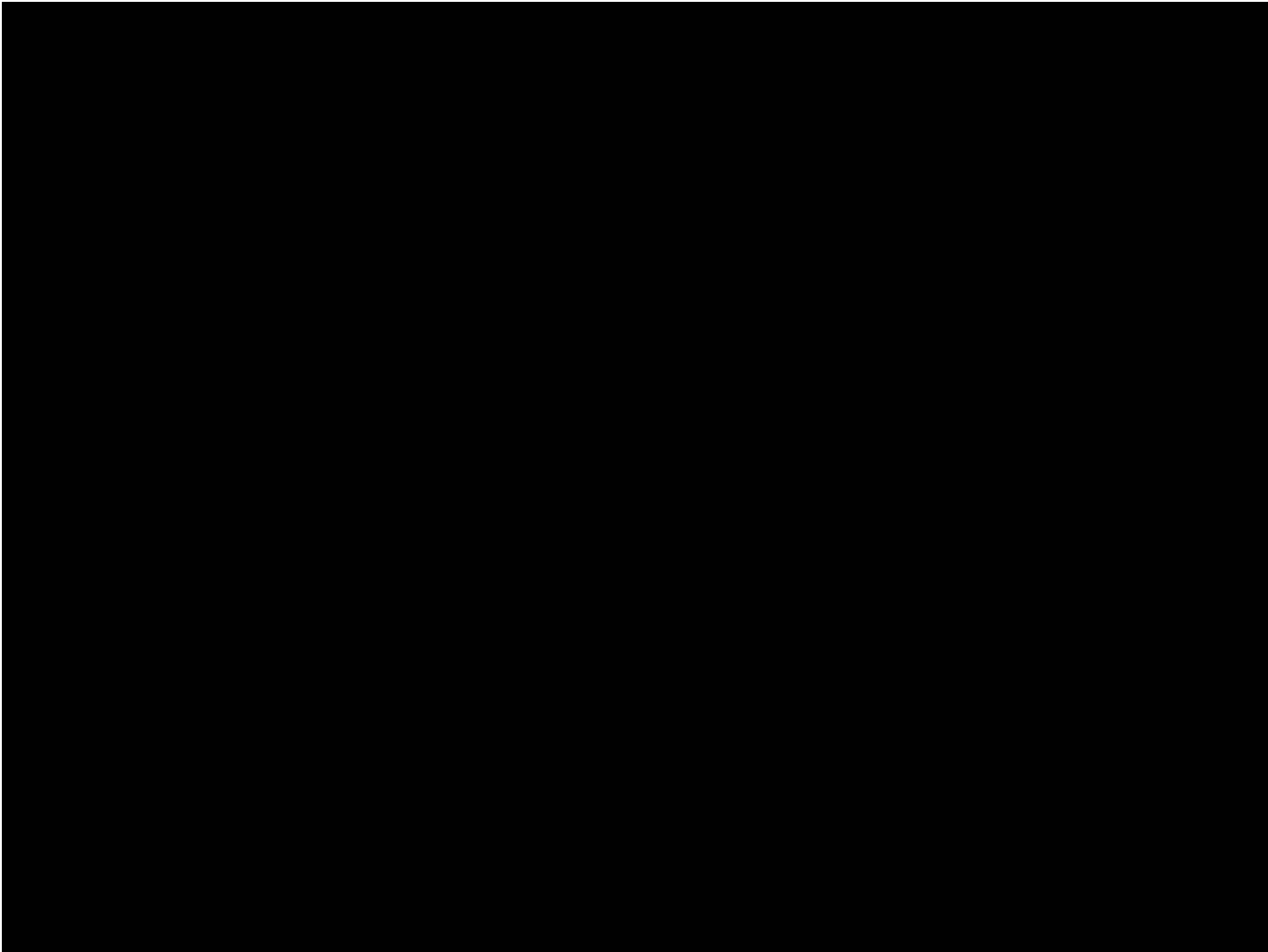


A photograph of a smiling woman in traditional African attire, including a beaded necklace and a yellow and orange patterned shawl. She is carrying a baby in a yellow sling. The baby is wearing a white and blue striped hat. The background is a bright, open landscape under a clear blue sky.

*A **woman's**
perspective*





Growing up in Toronto in the 1960's



Refugee Health Program

- Started in 1989, in Hamilton, to address needs of refugees entering at the US-CDN border (Fort Erie)
- Separation and displacement
- Post traumatic stress
- Isolation
- Adaptation





Types of newcomers

- The refugee claimant
- The immigrant
- The undocumented migrant
- The worker
- The student
- The visitor



The stages of Migration

- Pre-migration
- Transition
- Resettlement
- Return to country of origin (Transnationals)



Factors related to migration that affect mental health

Premigration	Migration	Postmigration
Adult		
Economic, educational and occupational status in country of origin	Trajectory (route, duration)	Uncertainty about immigration or refugee status
Disruption of social support, roles and network	Exposure to harsh living conditions (e.g., refugee camps)	Unemployment or underemployment
Trauma (type, severity, perceived level of threat, number of episodes)	Exposure to violence	Loss of social status
Political involvement (commitment to a cause)	Disruption of family and community networks	Loss of family and community social supports
	Uncertainty about outcome of migration	Concern about family members left behind and possibility for reunification
		Difficulties in language learning, acculturation and adaptation (e.g., change in sex roles)

Source: Canadian Medical Association Journal, 2010.
<http://www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2010/07/05/cmaj.090292.full.pdf+html>



Gender Violence

- Female Genital Cutting
- Rape and Sexual Assault
- Homophobia
- Intimate Partner Violence



Mental Health

- In general, prevalence of common mental health problems is lower in immigrants
- It is common for mental distress to present as physical symptoms
- Culturally accepted syndromes
- Women are at greater risk for postpartum depression
- Refugees are at higher risk for trauma-related illness

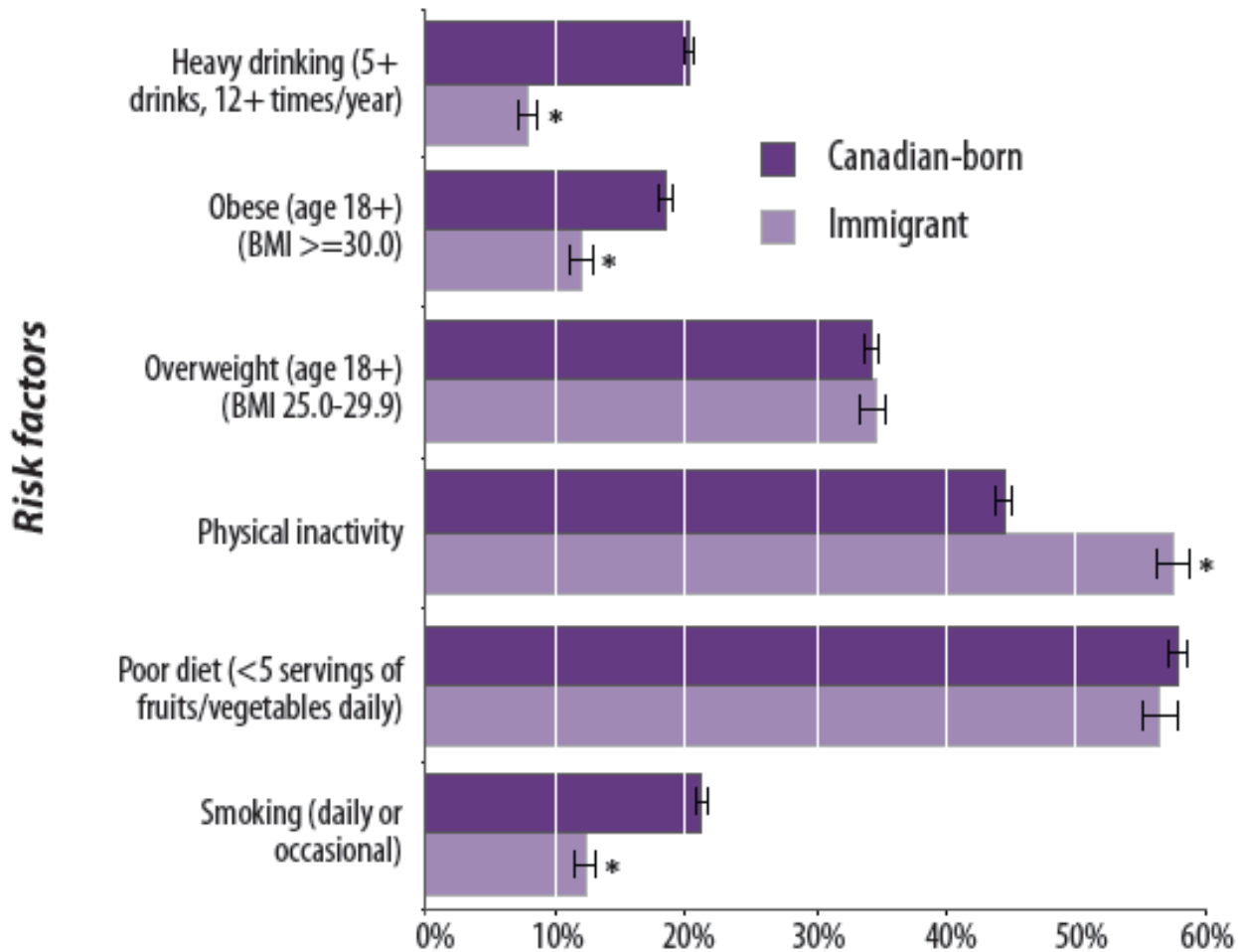


From Deprivation to Excess

- Strong sexual stereotypes or cultural barriers that prevent daily exercise
- Reunification of families
- Child Parent Conflict
- Impact of western diet and marketing to children
- Impact of fertility and child bearing



Prevalence of selected risk factors, Canadian-born and immigrant population, Ontario (2005, 2007/08)



* Significantly different from the Canadian-born average based on assessment of 95% confidence intervals.



Migrant Workers

- Migrant workers tend to arrive healthy but work in jobs with existing health and safety concerns
- Other health risks include those associated with substandard working or living conditions
- Reasons why migrant workers may not seek care include economic and language barriers, work schedules and a fear that the use of health services might threaten their employment or immigration status



Conclusions

- Living in Canada is a privilege and a blessing
- Migration poses specific stresses, yet most immigrants do well with the transitions to resettlement
- Refugees have significant mental health issues related to trauma and forced migration
- Women continue to face more barriers, more risk, and require additional women-centred, culturally appropriate and accessible supports

