

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN ROMA HEALTH FOR CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- Introduction to Roma Population
 - Health Status of Roma Population
 - Barriers to Health for Roma Population
 - Programs & Initiatives to help Roma Population
 - Conclusion
 - Questions
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ROMA POPULATION

There are around 10-12 million Roma people in Europe.

The greatest numbers of Roma live in Central Eastern Europe.

- Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and the former Yugoslavia

Estimates by the Council of Europe show that almost all EU countries have Roma communities of varying sizes.

- Slovakia (9%)
- Czech Republic (1.5-2.5%)

Less than 20% of Roma in Europe are nomadic.

HEALTH STATUS

Communicable Diseases

- Prevalence of several diseases is higher in Roma population in comparison to the rest of the population.

Non-Communicable Diseases

- High prevalence of cardiovascular related diseases seems to be a substantial health burden.

HEALTH STATUS (CONTINUED)

Reproductive Health

- The access to information and services regarding reproductive health of Roma women is an issue.
 - Roma women seem not to visit their gynecologists for periodical check-ups.
- Miscarriage is a serious reproductive health issue that occurs very often among Roma women.

[WHO, 2012](#)



HEALTH STATUS (CONTINUED)

Vaccinations

- Still considered a public health priority due to the fact that the coverage of the vaccine-preventable diseases is not satisfactory.

[EU, 2014](#)



HEALTH STATUS (CONTINUED)

Nutrition

- High incidence of malnutrition among Roma communities since it is regarded as a part of a wider concern for public health.
- Obesity, which is an endemic problem of Western societies, seems also to affect the Roma community, especially women.

[WHO, 2012](#)



HEALTH STATUS (CONTINUED)

Lifestyle

- Alcohol and tobacco are two of the most severe risk factors related to various health problems.
 - Varying degrees of awareness about alcohol abuse among Roma communities exist.

LIFESTYLE (CONTINUED)

Table 10 Estimates of Roma life expectancy years compared to non-Roma by country

| Country | Estimated Roma life expectancy compared to non-Roma | Source |
|--------------------|--|--|
| The Czech Republic | -5 to -10 years | Council of Europe estimate |
| Slovakia | -5 to -10 years | Slovakia Regional office of public health survey, (2008) |

BARRIERS TO HEALTH

Access to health care services

Co-payments

Fear and mistrust of health professionals by Roma patients

Lack of access to statutory health insurance schemes (Czech Republic, 5.4%; Slovakia, 2.8%)

- Those Roma who are excluded from health insurance coverage often rely on (mainly free) emergency services, the benevolence of individual health professionals and advice from pharmacies.

Refusal or reluctance by health professionals to see Roma patients

[WHO, 2012](#)

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

Several countries have focused on improving access to healthcare for the most vulnerable Roma:

- A commitment by the government in France to reducing financial barriers to healthcare.
- The investment in health mediators for the Roma community in Romania and Spain.
- Vaccination campaigns and projects for Roma exists in Belgium, Ireland, Italy or Poland.
- Bulgaria, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom have even taken to using mobile medical units.

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES (CONTINUED)

European Commission adopted a European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020

- A strategy for a new growth path – smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – leaves no room for the persistent economic and social marginalization of what constitutes Europe's largest minority.
- A means to complement and reinforce the EU's equality legislation and policies by addressing the specific needs of Roma regarding equal access to employment, education, housing and healthcare.

[EU, 2014](#)

EU FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES UP TO 2020

Access to healthcare: Reduce the gap in health status between the Roma and the rest of the population

- Life expectancy at birth in the EU is 76 for men and 82 for women; for Roma, it is estimated to be 10 years less.
- This disparity reflects the overall gap in health between Roma and non-Roma and is linked to their poor living situations, lack of targeted information campaign, limited access to quality healthcare and exposure to higher health risks.

CONCLUSION

There is a huge gap between the health status of Roma and non-Roma people.

Health initiatives are important in addressing the magnitude of differences in the health of Roma population within Europe, mainly Central and Eastern Europe, and the social and economical disparities that cause this divide.

- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Access to health care

QUESTIONS?



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