

5 reasons

to pay more attention to Immigrant Seniors!



Our research on immigrant seniors is part of a wider study on the settlement outcomes for Canadian Immigrant Women, Youth and Seniors which is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. You can read the full report here.

- We have analyzed:**
- 226 scholarly articles
 - Articles were published between 2008 and 2017
 - We have also analyzed grey literature

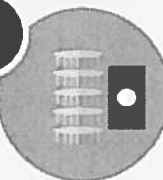
For more information on this research, you can read the [research summary](#) or kindly contact Naolo Charles, Knowledge Exchange Officer.

 naolo@yorku.ca

 Follow us on Facebook

 Follow us on Twitter

1 **Recent immigrant seniors are more likely to live in chronic poverty**



The majority of Canadian immigrant seniors are established immigrants who came to Canada more than 10 years ago. However, the rate of chronic low income for recent immigrant seniors is significantly higher as compared to the rate for Canadian-born seniors (Picot and Lu 2017)

2 **Place of birth is a risk factor for poverty among immigrant seniors**



Newcomers from East and South Asia are more likely to suffer from chronic low income than immigrants from Northwestern Europe, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and the United States (Picot and Lu, 2017).

3 **Immigrant seniors would benefit from stronger official language skills**



Many newcomer seniors rely on their children for learning or communicating in English. Both the middle generation and grandchildren act as Language brokers accompanying recent immigrant seniors to appointments and settlement services and functioning as interpreters and translators (Bauer 2013).

4 **Multigenerational living, both a challenge and an opportunity**



Multigenerational living arrangements act as a buffer against immigrant senior poverty by making housing affordable and living costs sustainable. While promoting social intergenerational childcare and domestic responsibilities, such multigenerational living arrangements can sometimes leave these seniors feeling overwhelmed.

5 **Immigrant seniors need jobs as well**



Despite their need to generate income, the needs of older adult immigrants and immigrant seniors are largely unmet by employment-related settlement services. In our survey of the settlement service landscape, no specific services targeting the labour market participation of recent or long-term seniors were found.

What are the settlement needs of immigrant seniors in Canada and what are the impacts of settlement services?

Nancy Mandell, Janice Phonepraseuth and Jana Borrás

What is this research about?

In 2016, 16.9% of the Canadian population are aged 65 and above. For the first time in Canadian history, there are now slightly more seniors than there are children aged 14 and under.

Recent immigrant seniors face a number of issues upon arrival in Canada, including chronic low income, lack of access to government income support programs, lack of understanding of either English or French, and difficulty accessing programs suited to their linguistic needs.

Our literature review reveals that there are relatively few academic articles published in the last 10 years focusing on the civic/social contributions of immigrant seniors in Canada and the services that they provide to their families and the community at large.

The purpose of this review was to explore the effectiveness of settlement services in facilitating positive settlement outcomes for recent Canadian immigrant seniors.

The overall trend in the literature highlights the lack of policies and programs that address the needs of newcomer seniors and limited research in this specific area. The paucity of programs and research is problematic because, even though newcomer seniors have a set of difficulties distinct from those of mainstream older Canadians and long-term immigrant seniors, these issues are not addressed in either academic research or policy documents.

We conclude that despite the rising population of both long-term and recent immigrant seniors in Canada, few specific settlement services address the needs of either group, especially recent immigrant seniors. We call for more research documenting both the experiences and needs of newcomer seniors in order to facilitate their social, economic, and cultural inclusion in Canadian society.

This research is part of a wider study on the settlement outcomes of Immigrant Women, Youth and Seniors, which is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Keywords: Immigrant seniors, Literature review

Article source: [Full report](#)

Funded by:



Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

What did researchers do?

The search for relevant literature covered both academic literature (e.g., journal databases such as Sociological Abstracts and Canadian Periodicals Index Quarterly) and grey literature (e.g., CERIS website, and Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal websites). In total, 226 articles were reviewed for this report. Using a standardized abstracting template, articles were summarized according to four broad areas of settlement—economic, social, political, and ideational (belonging and identity). The scope of the literature is limited to English articles published in Canada.

What did researchers find?

Thirty percent of all immigrant seniors and over 50% of recent immigrant seniors live in chronic low-income compared to a rate of 2% among the Canadian-born seniors (Picot and Lu 2017:14).

Being racialized also constitutes a big factor for senior poverty. When it comes to language skills, our study finds that many newcomer seniors rely on their children for learning or communicating in English. Since the majority of recent immigrant seniors enter under the Family Reunification Program, they migrate to join adult children and grandchildren. However, settlement services for recent senior migrants in multigenerational living arrangements are virtually non-existent.

Because of their lack of language skills and the change of social environment, most senior newcomers experience social isolation.

However, they still make some efforts to be engaged in their communities

and they seem to gravitate around ethnic organizations and faith-based institutions.

Newcomer seniors' health is negatively impacted by their challenges in the settlement process. They are also at risk for abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological and emotional abuse.

While they could benefit from services, many newcomer seniors have difficulty finding information and remain unaware of existing programs mainly because of language barriers.

How can you get involved?

This summary is based on the Knowledge synthesis phase of the research. Researchers are now completing primary research with key informants from the settlement sector and immigrant seniors. If you are interested in participating, kindly contact the Research Lead.

Recommendations

Our study highlights the importance of government income support to reduce chronic low income of recent seniors.

We also encourage the implementation of programs providing information on senior employment opportunities. Our recommendations also include the provision of housing support programs which would increase recent seniors' independence and a call for increased funding of both formal and informal ethnocultural social and community supports.

About the author(s)

Nancy Mandell, Research Lead Professor, York University

Nancy Mandell is a Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at York University. Her research and teaching interests include gender, aging, intergenerational relations and migrant settlement. mandell@yorku.ca

Jana Borrás and Janice Phonepraseuth, PhD candidates, York Sociology.

Newcomer Informed Consent Form – Individual Interviews

Date: August 10, 2018

Study Name: Immigrant Women, Youth, and Seniors: A Research and Knowledge Mobilization Project on the Settlement Outcomes–Services Nexus (IWYS)

Researchers:

Adnan Türegün, CERIS, 801 Kaneff Tower, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3; 416-736-5223; turegun@yorku.ca

Nancy Mandell, Department of Sociology, 225 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3; 416-736-2100 x 66905; mandell@yorku.ca

Rupaleem Bhuyan, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, 246 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1V4; 416-946-5085; r.bhuyan@utoronto.ca

John Shields, Department of Politics & Public Administration, JOR 720, Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2K3; 416-979-5000 x 6167; jshields@politics.ryerson.ca

Purpose of the Research: The IWYS project is about three immigrant groups – women, youth, and seniors – who each have special but different settlement needs in Canada. We want to know their settlement experiences and if they receive what they need in services. We also want to propose new service interventions for their successful settlement. The research is conducted in various communities across Ontario. We will develop new service ideas based on emerging practices in local communities. We will share what we find and discuss it with stakeholders in immigrant settlement and integration.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: We are asking you to reflect on your settlement experience and express your opinion on immigrant settlement issues, including services. The interview will last a maximum of 1.5 hours. You will receive \$30.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: We hope that our research will benefit the immigrant settlement community, including service providers, policy makers, researchers, and immigrants like yourself, by identifying knowledge and service strengths and gaps, and by proposing intervention strategies to fill the gaps. As a research participant, you will access our research findings in various formats, if you wish to.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project, either now or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. If you decide to stop participating, you will still be eligible to receive the promised pay for agreeing to be in the project. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. If you give your explicit consent by ticking the check box below, we will audiotape the interview. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research team members will have access to this information. The data will be stored and archived at CERIS for 8 years and then will be destroyed. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Adnan Türegün either by telephone at 416-736-5223 or by e-

mail (turegun@yorku.ca). This research has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, _____, consent to participate in the IWYS study conducted by Dr. Adnan Türegün and his colleagues. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____

Signature _____
Principal Investigator

Date _____

Additional consent

I agree to audio-recording.

I decline to be audio-recorded and understand that hand-written notes will be taken.