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Co-design interventions with migrant communities for mental health promotion in Portugal

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Background: Our study explored the mental health needs and resources among migrant communities in Portugal to inform the co-design of health promotion strategies.

Methods: A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a survey, semi-structured interviews, and participatory workshops. A total of 744 migrants aged over 18 years participated in the survey, and 35 in the interviews and workshops. Perceived anxiety and depression were assessed.

Results: The sample included a slight male majority (53.0%). Most participants lived with family (62.9%) and had resided in Portugal between one and five years (65.6%). Key findings showed that living with relatives, friends, or colleagues, having a higher income, fluency in Portuguese, and a longer duration of stay were associated with better perceived mental health. Men reported better mental health outcomes than women. Migration status, marital status, and education level were not significantly associated. Building on these findings, co-design workshops were held with migrant participants and key stakeholders to develop culturally sensitive ideas for promoting mental health. These participatory sessions ensured that the strategies reflected the communities' lived experiences and social realities.

Conclusions: The study highlights the importance of addressing social determinants of health and involving migrant communities actively in shaping interventions that promote well-being and social inclusion.