



Mum Health

A regional programme for the promotion of the global well-being of women

BRIEF PRESENTATION PAPER

When women are well, the whole world feels better

Quando le donne stanno bene, tutto il mondo sta meglio

[A. Sen , 2001]

Promoting women's health.

The promotion of women's health has been a focus for attention and the subject of international and national programmes for some time. The World Health Organisation has been committed to cutting female mortality rates and the complications of pregnancy and birth since the 1980s, furthering women's access to health services everywhere in the world. This commitment pertains to the right to life, to safety, a respect for diversity and the right to non-discrimination.

Mum Health: a Tuscan Regional programme.

The Tuscan Region's Mum Health programme has been set up in response to the ever-increasing numbers of migrant women in this country and in Tuscany and the need to safeguard women's health, their reproductive health in particular. According to national research (Istisan Report 1999 and 2006) many social and linguistic barriers impede migrant women's access to and taking advantage of sociomedical services, thus presenting a risk in terms of inadequate help in pregnancy, incorrect use of contraception and greater recourse to elective terminations of pregnancy.

The project now under way includes the implementation of training sessions for sociomedical operators in all the health centres within the Tuscan region, which will last for several months. In parallel, multimedia material on reproductive health is being produced in several different languages in an endeavour to encourage the awareness and utilisation of advisory bureaux. A series of themed meetings will also be held in Florence on Thursdays, "I Giovedì de L'albero della Salute", which will publicise and set out the programme objectives.

Taking responsibility for one's own health.

Mum Health aims to instil a sense of responsibility for personal health, reproductive health in this particular case, among migrant women within the Tuscan territory, to the greater benefit of child and adult well-being, given women's role as nurturers. The programme aims to develop women's health skills and promote access to health services through participatory events. Experiences of countries with high immigration rates, such as England, have shown the value of involving migrant groups in the implementation of programmes, promoting the health services' "active offer" role, which involves focussing on people's needs and their own ability to meet them.

Mum Health is concerned with 'global' health, which is an indivisible and undivided asset, which links individual health to that of the environment and social networks. It therefore aims to foster situations of awareness and exchange between people of various different origins, types, cultural and linguistic backgrounds who all inhabit the same territory.

The Tuscan Region's Mum Health Programme has been conceived in collaboration with the Tuscan health centres and is co-ordinated by L'albero della Salute, the Reference Structure for Cultural Health Mediation, within the framework of the implementation of programmes for the requalification of advisory services, responsible male and female parenting, and sexual awareness. [D.G.R. no. 259, Annex C, 21 April 2006]

Objectives and Strategies

The ultimate aim of the programme known as *Mum Health* is to promote and improve the health, taken to mean the "global health", of migrant women living in the Tuscan territory, with the rebound impact that this has on the well-being of entire migrant communities and on children in particular, given women's pivotal role as *care givers*.

The project objectives are:

1. To raise migrant women's awareness of health services both in terms of their right to benefit from them and in terms of what they have to offer
2. To raise migrant women and men's awareness of contraceptive methods and thus cut down on elective terminations of pregnancy
3. To raise migrant women's awareness of screening for female tumours
4. To promote the *Percorso Nascita* among migrant women
5. To intensify the use of sociomedical services by migrant groups during the post-partum period
6. The strategies involved are:
 - promoting *health literacy* among migrant women;
 - involving migrant communities in the identification and setting up of activities;
 - *empowerment* of migrant benefits with particular reference to women;
 - operator training;
 - dissemination of information;
 - networking;
 - provision of services geared to the difficulties migrant women and men have in terms of access;
 - teaching and information about sociomedical services.

Activities

- Analysis of context, mapping of migrant clusters and programmes aimed at women's health
- Programmatic and support meetings in which operators from all the Tuscan Health Centres will take part, with a view to promoting the active offer of services in the area of reproductive and maternal-infantile health, recognised as an accredited training programme throughout the Area Vasta
- Consolidation of mediator training in the sphere of reproductive health
- Planning and drafting of multimedia health education materials (audio CD with information booklet and sub-titled video)
- Themed Thursday meetings intended to popularise issues relating to the health of migrant women: I Giovedì de L'albero della Salute
- Mass media sensitisation
- Publication of the methods and strategies employed for setting up the activities, the results achieved and the principal instruments devised and put into practice