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Use of general practitioner in relation to self-perceived health among Turkish immigrants in Denmark and The Netherlands: do patterns differ?

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Background

Differences in health-care utilization in relation to self-perceived health between immigrants and the majority population have been reported in some EU-countries. Yet, cross-country comparison of data availability and inequalities of immigrants’ use of health-care services in relation to self-perceived health has not been carried out.

Methods

Danish national survey data from 2007 containing responses from 1131 ethnic Danes and 372 Turkish immigrants and Dutch national survey data from 2001 containing responses from 6046 ethnic Dutch and 322 Turkish immigrants were used. Both data sets included questions on self-perceived health (SF-12) and were linked to registry data on contacts to general practitioner (GP). Logistic regression models were used.

Results

Preliminary results showed that contacts to GP was more frequent in Turkish immigrants compared with the majority population in both The Netherlands [adjusted odds ratio (AOR) = 1.72, 95% confidence interval (CI) = 1.35–2.91] and Denmark (AOR = 1.43, 95% CI = 1.08–1.89) after adjustment for sex, age and income. When also adjusting for self-perceived health, the statistically significant higher odds of contact to GP between Turkish immigrants and the majority population remained in The Netherlands (AOR = 1.43, 95% CI = 1.11–1.83) but disappeared in Denmark (AOR = 1.20, 95% CI = 0.90–1.61). Comparisons of ethnic inequalities in the use of health care and self-perceived health between two