

- **Full Name** Shahla Yousif Namak
- **Degree:** Associate Professor. MD
- **Department:** Family & Community Medicine
- **Project Title** Arab Muslim Refugee Women's Health Initiatives
- **Project Co-authors:** Mariam Gomaa, MD, Joanne Sandburg, PhD Julienne K. Kirk, PharmD
- **Support for the work:** None

## **Abstract**

**BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES:** We have limited information about the knowledge and beliefs of Arabic speaking refugee women in the United States with respect to women's health. Our objectives are to assess the knowledge and beliefs on regard to reproductive health of the Arabic Muslim refugee women so providers can better understand how to provide gynecologic care and health education.

**METHODS:** Seventeen adult, Arabic-speaking Muslim refugee women living in North Carolina completed a survey in English or Arabic about their knowledge and beliefs relevant to women's health.

**RESULTS:** The contraception method of choice by the majority was IUD. Half the women reported that breastfeeding can prevent pregnancy. Only 29% reported that women should start taking folic acid before pregnancy. Fifty percent and 94% of women reported that pap smears and mammograms screen for cervical and breast cancer, respectively. More than half the women reported they would not or were unsure whether they would have a child vaccinated for HPV at the Center for Disease Control's recommended age.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Understanding the knowledge gaps including beliefs and attitudes among a culturally diverse population and associated cultural factors is valuable to implementing strategies to educate Arabic-speaking refugee women on preventive health.