

Emergency care for women irregular migrants who arrive in Spain by small boat:

A qualitative study

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Background: this study aimed to describe and understand the experiences and health needs of women irregular migrants during emergency care provision upon arrival in Spain by small boat.

Methods: a qualitative study based on Gadamer's phenomenology was used. The data collection included 13 in-depth interviews with women irregular migrants and 10 in-depth interviews with key informants. The study took place in the Spanish Red Cross facilities between February 2017 and April 2018. **Results:** two main themes emerged from the data analysis: the need for emergency care focused on women irregular migrants with the sub-themes "Women irregular migrants as objects of sexual exploitation" and "The mother-child dyad as the axis in human trafficking"; and developing an emergency care gender policy for women irregular migrants, with the subthemes "Healthcare in a police-controlled setting: detecting weaknesses" and "Promoting screening and safety protocols focused on women irregular migrants". **Conclusions:** women irregular migrants who arrive in Spain by small boat have specific needs and healthcare problems. Due to strict safety conditions during emergency care provision, rape and human trafficking can go unnoticed. **Implications:** interdisciplinary care protocols and new health policies that have a gender perspective are needed to improve the emergency care provided to women irregular migrants. © 2019 by the authors.

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