Migrant health strategies in Scandinavia - tackling health inequalities?
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Background
A European study including the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) found that the more exclusionist the integration model, the poorer immigrants’ self-reported health and the greater health disparities between immigrants and non-immigrants. Some disparities disappeared when adjusted for socio-economic factors. However, comparisons on a European level are methodologically challenging, as e.g. data availability and contextual factors vary greatly. Scandinavia represents a unique and near ideal experimental situation: similar migration patterns, historical and cultural similarities, and extensive and comparable population data. Integration policies differ however, with Norway and Sweden’s multicultural model on one extreme, and Denmark’s exclusionist on the other. This study examines whether national migrant health strategies or their absence, may represent one of the pathways through which different integration policy models are linked to different health outcomes for migrants.

Methods
The study is based on a review of policy documents related to national and/or regional migrant health strategies. Search was conducted in English, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian.

Results
Norway has a national level migrant health strategy, while Denmark and Sweden tackle migrant health at the regional level. Despite similar migrant health strategies, research shows self-reported health among migrants in Denmark and Sweden differs significantly, suggesting the impact of other policy areas on migrant health outcomes.

Conclusions
The findings suggest that the pathways to health and health disparities should be seen in a broader policy context, taking into account socio-economic policy areas impacting on the social determinants of health.

Key messages
• In Denmark and Sweden integration models and health outcomes in migrants differ, yet migrant health strategies are similar
- Socio-economic policy areas may play a role in shaping health outcomes and disparities