

HEALTH EVIDENCE NETWORK SYNTHESIS REPORT 44

Public health aspects of migrant health: a review of the evidence on health status for refugees and asylum seekers in the European Region

Hannah Bradby | Rachel Humphris | Dave Newall | Jenny Phillimore



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

**World Health
Organization**
Europe

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HEN and the WHO Public Health Aspects of Migration in Europe project

At the fifth meeting of the WHO European Advisory Committee on Health Research (EACHR) which took place on 7–8 July 2014, EACHR agreed to form a subcommittee on migration and health to review the Public Health Aspects of Migration in Europe (PHAME) strategic framework. EACHR recommended that the Secretariat commission three HEN synthesis reports tackling the challenges of three distinct migration groups: undocumented migrants, labour migrants, and refugees and asylum seekers.

This HEN synthesis report is therefore the result of a cross-divisional effort in the Regional Office between the PHAME project of the Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being and the Evidence and Information for Policy-making unit of the Division of Information, Evidence, Research and Innovation.

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Abstract

Refugees and asylum seekers are defined in many ways but can be considered as those who did not make a voluntary choice to leave their country of origin and cannot return home in safety. Outcome data are limited and mostly focused on perinatal and mental health but do suggest significant levels of unmet need. This scoping review considered 72 studies where refugees and asylum seekers formed part or all of the population studied. Access to appropriate health care across the WHO European Region is very varied and is overwhelmingly shaped by legal frameworks and the regulation of the migration process. The need for improved communication with asylum seekers and coordinated action between agencies within and beyond the medical system is widely noted. Improved data to support intersectoral working to address the health care needs of asylum seekers and refugees are imperative.

Keywords

DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE, EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH CARE, HEALTH POLICY, REFUGEES, SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Suggested citation

Bradby H, Humphris R, Newall D, Phillimore J. Public health aspects of migrant health: a review of the evidence on health status for refugees and asylum seekers in the European Region. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2015 (Health Evidence Network synthesis report 44).

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Publications

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UN City, Marmorvej 51

DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø, Denmark

Alternatively, complete an online request form for documentation, health information, or for permission to quote or translate, on the Regional Office website (<http://www.euro.who.int/pubrequest>).

ISSN 2227-4316

ISBN 978 92 890 5110 1

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ABBREVIATIONS

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EU	European Union
HEN	Health Evidence Network
NGO	nongovernmental organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



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