Refugee health news

- Australian health authorities are working with the African community to try to reduce the number of poisonings from lye water, a highly-alkaline product used to soften foods such as corn and rice. While RHS has not seen any cases in our clinics, 13 cases across Australia have recently been reported of children under five drinking lye water, six of them in South Australia. All the SA cases are from the local African community, mostly Sudanese families. Drinking the liquid directly can result in mouth ulceration, stomach injuries or gastric burns. SA’s Director of Public Health, Kevin Buckett says some migrants do not realise the strength of the Australian-sold version of the product. For more information see the SA Department of Health media release. Fact sheets are available in Dinka, Arabic, Swahili, French and Kirundi.

- The Fairfield Refugee Nutrition Project is currently undertaking an impact evaluation of its first 3 years, the outcome of which will shape the next 3 years program activities. Watch this space for findings. For more information contact Faye Southcombe.

- Are you working with older people who have a refugee background? Consultative forums are being held in South West Sydney to inform the development of guidelines to assist community care providers to provide more effective services for older refugees. To RSVP and more details, contact Sharon@agingbycaring.com.au:
  - Tuesday 16th February, 10-12am, Bankstown Area Multicultural Network, Bankstown
  - Friday 19th February, 10-12am, Multicultural Community Care Services, Wetherill Park
  - Wednesday 24th February, 10-12am, CatholicCare, Liverpool.

- In response to the overwhelming request for nutrition sessions in the Sydney West and Sydney South West areas, Bilingual Community Educators (BCEs) are available to give basic information on good nutrition, (not to be confused with RHS Fairfield Refugee Nutrition Project that conducts comprehensive evidence-based nutrition education with a nutritionist). This program was developed by Sydney West Area Health Service, called “Healthy Eating for the Whole Family” program, and can be run for students or parents at adult English classes, IECs, or through community organisations. BCEs are available in almost all refugee languages. Contact the RHS BCE Coordinator for more information or to book a session.

- 2010 Meeting dates for the NSW Refugee Health Improvement Network (RHIN) are as follows:
  - Tuesday 2nd February
  - Tuesday 6th April
  - Tuesday 8th June
  - Tuesday 3rd August
  - Tuesday 5th October
  - Tuesday 30th November
The RHIN is forum for health and non-government organisations to discuss refugee health issues and identify multi-sectoral strategies to improve the health of refugees in NSW. Meetings are held at Anglicare, Parramatta unless otherwise advised. Contact the Convenor for more details.

New resources

- [DIAC's Settlement Reporting Facility](#) has been enhanced. A video is available on how to create reports and there are "Learn More" help guides at every step of the process.

- [The Healthy Living in Wyndham Karen Community Resource Kit](#) provides information in Karen and English on a range of health and safety topics including: Safety in the home; Dental health; Personal health; Healthy food habits; Staying fit and active; Alcohol and
Tobacco; Mental health. It is an initiative of the Wyndham Humanitarian Network's Health and Wellbeing Working Group (VIC). For more information please contact the Health Promotion Officer at ISIS Primary Care on (03) 8734 1400.

- A new project evaluation report entitled ‘Overcoming Barriers faced by Aged CALD Trauma Survivors: supporting culturally and linguistically diverse older people who have experienced trauma’ has been developed by Murdoch University and the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS). Enquires about the project may be directed to reception@asetts.org.au.

- SASA! A Film about Women, Violence and HIV/AIDS is a 30-minute documentary film telling two women’s personal stories of violence and HIV/AIDS. It was developed by Raising Voices as a part of an Activist Kit on violence against women and HIV/AIDS. It can be downloaded for free.

### Publications & research

- Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture (2009) Access to specialist services by refugees in Victoria. Department of Human Services, Victoria. This report documents existing care pathways for refugees requiring specialist health services in Victoria in order to determine the most effective models of care and identify possible new models of service delivery.


### Relevant 2010 dates

- **21 March:** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- **7 April:** World Health Day
- **20 June:** World Refugee Day
- **20-26 June:** Refugee Week 2010. For more details see the Refugee Council of Australia website or email them directly info@refugeecouncil.org.au
- **26 June:** International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- **16 November:** International Day for Tolerance
- **10 December:** Human Rights Day.
The University of Tasmania is offering a course in Immigration Nursing. Visit http://www.postgrad.utas.edu.au/courses/health_science/nursing.html and click on Immigration Nursing to read the brochure.

- **9-10 February 2010**: Responding to refugee women and girls at risk: The meaning of Risk, 2-day course, Centre for Refugee Research, UNSW. Registration forms can be downloaded through the CRR website.

- **11-12 February 2010**: From Hope to Horror: Exploring a community based approach to addressing domestic violence and family violence within refugee communities, 2-day course, Centre for Refugee Research, UNSW. Registration forms can be downloaded through the CRR website.

- **26 February 2010**: Violence against women in refugee communities, Surry Hills. Organised by the NSW Refugee Health Service and the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV). To register, contact ECAV: ph 9840 3850, ecav@wsahs.nsw.gov.au.

- **17 March 2010**: STARTTS’ Free Clinical Evening Master Class “Self Issues” in Supervising Trauma Work, presented by Daphne Hewson. To RSVP contact Jacqueline Donoso at STARTTS 9794 1900.

- **22-23 March 2010**: Frontiers of Trauma Treatment: The Roles of Attention, Memory, Arousal Modulation and the Therapeutic Relationship, STARTTS 2-Day Seminar, with guest speaker Dr Bessel van der Kolk, Sydney Masonic Centre. To RSVP contact Jacqueline Donoso at STARTTS 9794 1900.

- **7-9 June 2010**: Diversity in Health 2010 Conference, Melbourne. Presented by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health. See the conference website for Conference themes and other details.

If you have a refugee health-related item for the next Refugee Health E-news please contact: Cathy Preston-Thomas, (02) 8778 0770, Cathy.Preston-Thomas@sswhs.nsw.gov.au

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