Refugee health news

- **Dental Health information sessions for refugee groups** are now available from RHS in Arabic, Assyrian, Burmese, Dari, Farsi, Karen, Kirundi, Hazaragi, Sudanese Arabic and Swahili. Our Bilingual Community Educators provide information to groups on basic oral health care. Topics include: identifying tooth decay, prevention strategies, and how to access public dental services. These sessions are available for free and were developed in conjunction with NSW Health’s Centre for Oral Health Strategy. To enquire about organising a session, contact Lidija Sestakova.

- RHS is helping to conduct a review of NSW Health’s Policy Directive on Medicare Ineligible Asylum Seekers, which was released in late 2009. We will be gathering quantitative and qualitative data from admissions and clinical staff at key hospital departments and relevant referring agencies. For more details contact Diana Milosevic.

- **Information on the new MBS items** available for refugee health assessments are now available: see the updated Health assessment for refugees and other humanitarian entrants factsheet and Health assessment for refugees and other humanitarian entrants: Questions and Answers sheet available on the Department of Health and Ageing website at Medicare Health Assessments Resource Kits.

- **Christmas Island Health Information** (updated August 2, 2010) provides information on health screening, assessments and services currently provided on Christmas Island to assist healthcare practitioners on the mainland in their care of refugees. Please click here for a copy or contact Louise Crowe, Victorian Refugee Health Network.

- **Concerns about health services in detention on Christmas Island** were raised in the Australian Human Rights Commission’s latest report. Their concerns included: the limited access to dental care; the lack of medical specialists (such as optometrists, physiotherapists, radiologists or others); the length of time some people in detention have to wait to see a nurse or doctor; the length of time it could take for an ambulance to arrive at one of the detention facilities in an emergency; and availability of mental health services. More details and related recommendations can be viewed online.

- **Pre Departure Medical Screening (PDMS) information** has been produced by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. It details the two types of PDMS conducted at overseas posts prior to departure to Australia including what screening is conducted, treatment and reporting. Please click here.

- **An initiative to provide at-school health services to students** at Beverley Hills Intensive English Centre has received support from the Schools First Seed Funding Award. Initiated by Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service’s refugee health program, the program aims to improve early identification and treatment of students’ health problems.
Australian Government has released statistics on the 2009-10 humanitarian program: In the 2009-10 financial year, the top countries of origin for offshore visas were:

- Burma    1959
- Iraq     1688
- Bhutan   1144
- Afghanistan  951
- Congo/DRC  584
- Ethiopia  392
- Somalia  317
- Sudan    298
- Liberia  258
- Sierra Leone  237.

The main countries of citizenship for onshore protection visas were:

- Afghanistan  1514
- Sri Lanka    505
- China       492
- Iraq        321
- Iran        282
- Zimbabwe    255
- Pakistan    218
- Stateless    192
- Egypt       79
- Burma       78.

RCOA has produced a summary of the main statistics related to refugees and asylum seekers, or you can read the DIAC report in full.

New resources

- **New TIS National online forms now available:** for booking an on-site interpreter, pre-booking a telephone interpreter, and for medical practitioners needing to register for a TIS National client code (needed to access fee-free interpreting through the Doctors Priority Line). The online medical practitioner registration form can be used by general practitioners, specialists and pharmacists.

- **A presentation on the sexual health of refugees** is now available on podcast. Hear Dr Jill Benson’s (SA) presentation at the 2010 Australasian Sexual Health Conference, NSW. Those interested in this area should note that the Victorian Refugee Health Network has established a working group on sexual and reproductive health: contact Louise Crowe for details.

- **HIV/AIDS in times of conflict:** The Forced Migration Review’s special supplement on HIV/AIDS is available for free online. It presents a selection of the AIDS, Security and Conflict Initiative’s research, case-studies, and other articles on the subject written by practitioners, policymakers and researchers.

- **Diabetes resources** have been published by the Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health (Vic), in June 2010. Using Bilingual Health Educators in Diabetes Prevention Education for Immigrant and Refugee Women report of the ‘Bilingual Health Educators Diabetes’ Project includes a case-study of the Karen-speaking sessions. Diabetes Prevention for Immigrant and Refugee Women: Findings from the Diabetes Healthy Living Project details refugee’s experiences of diabetes, prevention programs for immigrant and refugee communities and key findings.

- **New Action on Disability in Ethnic Communities (ADEC) DVD** ‘Can I Do it My Way?...Yes!’, tells the story of five very remarkable individuals from different cultures overcoming the most incredible challenges. Available in Vietnamese,
Sudanese Arabic, Somali, Cantonese and Mandarin. For more info contact ADEC on (03) 9480 1666.

- **New resources for new mothers**: the booklet *Exercises before and after birth* is available in a number of refugee-relevant languages including: Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Dinka, English, Farsi, Turkish, and Urdu. An *Information about Vitamin D for pregnant women and new mothers* factsheet is available in Arabic, Chinese, Dari, English, Farsi, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu.

**Publications & research**

Links to abstracts are provided where full texts are not available for free.


**Training & professional development**


- 30 November 2010: NSW Refugee Health Improvement Network meeting, Parramatta. 9.30-12.00am. Open to all services working with refugees. Contact Cathy Preston-Thomas for more details.
30 November 2010: Multicultural Young People and Mental Health in NSW Forum, Granville, Sydney. Organised by Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN) NSW. RSVP by 26 Nov to MYAN NSW Coordinator myinn@yapa.org.au or call (02) 9281 5522 ext 6.

29 November 2010: FGM One Day Training Workshop, Westmead Hospital. Open to all professionals who may come into contact with women girls and families affected by Female Genital Mutilation. CDP points are available. For more information contact: Shairon Fray (02) 8838 2007.

1-3 June 2011: Canadian Refugee Health Conference, Toronto Canada.

Refugee Health e-News is produced bi-monthly. 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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