Refugee health news

UNHCR details health conditions in Nauru and Manus islands: see UNHCR monitoring visit to Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, 23 to 25 October 2013; and UNHCR monitoring visit to the Republic of Nauru, 7 to 9 October 2013.

Keeping up with changes to asylum seeker healthcare: Victorian Refugee Health Network has published the Humanitarian program related policy changes: 18 month snapshot. The snapshot notes that services in Victoria report an increased frequency of emergency department presentations and acute inpatient admissions among asylum seekers.

Tougher sentences for FGM offences in NSW: The NSW Government has increased penalties for people convicted of performing female genital mutilation (now a maximum sentence of 21 years), and made it a crime to remove a person from NSW to undergo the procedure overseas (maximum sentence of 21 years). NSW Health will be developing education campaigns for relevant communities.

Inquiry into immigration detention of children: the Australian Human Rights Commission has announced a second national inquiry into the detention of children seeking asylum in Australia. Numerous health associations are expected to provide input. See the AHRC website for details.

Immigration Health Advisory Group has been disbanded. The advisory group responsible for overseeing the health of asylum seekers in Australia was formed in 2006 after recommendations made in the Palmer and Comrie Inquiries that followed the Vivian Alvarez and Cornelia Rau cases. Comments on its being disbanded are available from the AMA, and in MJA Insight.

Research on the psychological and neurobiological effects of refugee trauma and pathways to recovery is being conducted by the Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program (UNSW). The Program comprises researchers and clinical psychologists at the School of Psychology, UNSW. Participation in their projects is open to all refugees and asylum seekers– including non-permanent visa holders. They will compensate eligible participants for their time.

Doctors for Refugees has been established. See their website for membership details www.doctors4refugees.org/ or visit their Facebook page www.facebook.com/doctors4refugees.

Symposium on Supporting Migrant and Refugee Families is being held on 5 June. Topics include health initiatives relating to refugee and migrant families, child protection, and parenting programs and services. For more information, contact Settlement Services International.

Medical staff in Syria being targeted: Australian doctor Annie Sparrow’s article Syria’s Assault on Doctors, and the UN’s Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Conference Room Paper: "Assault on medical care in Syria" has details. Our thoughts go out to our colleagues overseas.
MYAN’s National Forum Report on young people from refugee backgrounds is now available. The Refugee Youth in Focus report includes summaries of the health plenaries and workshops. Click here to download.

A comprehensive Mental Health Bibliography has been compiled by The National Partnership for Community Training and Pathways to Wellness (US). The bibliography includes general information on screening and assessment processes, effective interventions and best and promising practices in therapy, clinical treatment and culturally specific modalities. In addition, this bibliography includes a section on special considerations and populations as well as a list of useful websites.

Community profiles developed by Refugee Health Vancouver include Myanmar, Bhutan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran and Iraq. Legal Aid has information on people from Afghanistan; African countries; Iraq; Burma; and Iran. Also of interest are their factsheets on Community contacts and referrals; and Information about refugee communities.

A cross-cultural mental health care resource kit for GPs has been developed by the NSW Transcultural Mental Health Centre. It provides advice on accessing interpreters, assessment guidelines, prescribing medication, culturally-appropriate counselling and more. Click here to download.

An online tool to enhance the cross-cultural communication skills of healthcare professionals has been produced by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (Vic). Topics include: best practice approaches for culturally competent service provision, including the teach-back technique, Kleinman’s explanatory model of health, and working effectively with interpreters. Click here.

DVD for new arrivals promoting healthy living: Northern Territory Medicare Local in conjunction with Melaleuca Refugee Centre, have released a multilingual DVD resource, Healthy Living in Australia. The DVD features a short animated video promoting healthy eating and lifestyle choices for newly arrived people. It is available in 9 languages: English, Tamil, Burmese, Persian, Dari, Arabic, Swahili, French and Nepali. Contact Renee Gries for details.

Responding to challenges of misuse of alcohol and other drugs by young people of refugee backgrounds Report by Foundation House (Vic) offers recommendations to policy makers, service providers and staff on working with young people of refugee backgrounds who may be particularly vulnerable to alcohol and drug misuse.


From Horror to Hope: Addressing domestic violence in refugee communities resettled in Australia training kit for community and government workers is now available through the Centre for Refugee Research’s website.


Hollander A (2013) Social inequalities in mental health and mortality among refugees and other immigrants to Sweden - epidemiological studies of register data, Global Health Action, 6(1), article no. 21059.


### Training and professional development

**17 Mar 2014:** MYAN NSW’s *Working with Young People from Multicultural Backgrounds* (workshop) organised by MYAN NSW. Free, Community MRC, Parramatta. To register email andrew@myannsw.org.au.

**20 Mar 2014:** *Multicultural Health Research to Practice Forum "Cultural Diversity - Considerations in Mental Health"* forum for mental health workers. Speakers include the NSW Mental Health Commissioner, John Feneley. RSVP: cathy.onclickagh@sesiachs.health.nsw.gov.au.

**18-19 Mar 2014:** *Violence Against Women in Refugee Communities* (training). Organised by the Education Centre Against Violence and the NSW Refugee Health Service, Parramatta, Sydney. See the ECAV website for details.

**21 Mar 2014:** Refugee Health Forum: Clinical considerations and pathways to improve patient journeys at Nepean Hospital. Contact Clare Darling for details: clare.darling@health.nsw.gov.au.

**25 Mar 2014:** ‘Down There’ 1-day workshop for service providers on how to talk about reproductive and sexual health issues with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Blacktown. $310. Contact: education@fpnsw.org.au.

**26 Mar 2014:** *Violence: Responses, Prevention and Intervention* Youth Health Forum. Session on *Brutal Beginnings: Overcoming refugee young people’s experience of violence* by Mr Max Schneider, Child and Adolescent Counsellor and School Liaison Officer, STARTTS. Children’s Hospital, Westmead. To register www.caah.chw.edu.au
**27 Mar 2014:** Core Concepts in Working with People from Refugee Backgrounds (workshop) 9.30am-4.30pm, STARTTS Carramar, $149, $99 for students.

**27-28 Mar 2014:** 'Accidental' Counsellor: Responding to Refugee Trauma Related Behaviours (workshop), 9.30am-4.30pm, STARTTS Carramar, $249, $149 students.

**3 Apr 2014:** Culturally Reflective Casework Practice 1-day training, a joint initiative of NSW Community Services and the Centre for Community Welfare Training (CCWT), Sydney. $225/$205. To register click here.

**16 Apr 2014:** 'Down There', one-day workshop for service providers on how to talk about reproductive and sexual health issues with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Fairfield. $310. Contact: education@fpnsw.org.au.

**22 Apr 2014:** Helping make Strong and Capable Mothers: Improving Maternal Health Care for Refugee Women, a one-day training for midwives in SLHD and SWSLHD, Liverpool, Sydney. Register with the Centre for Education and Workplace Development, or contact RHS refugeehealth@sswahs.nsw.gov.au.

**12-13 Jun 2014:** Cultural Diversity in Ageing 2014 Conference – Shaping Inclusive Services, Melbourne Convention Centre. See their website for more details.

**27 Jun 2014:** Refugee Health Workshop open to all health staff in the Nepean Blue Mountains LHD. Contact Clare Darling to register.

**13-14 Aug 2014:** Violence Against Women in Refugee Communities 2-day training by the Education Centre Against Violence and the NSW Refugee Health Service, Parramatta. See the ECAV website for details.

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