The Syrian caseload: As detailed in the last eNews, health services are preparing for an increased Syrian caseload. The Refugee Health Service (RHS) is offering health staff training in refugee health: contact Cathy Preston-Thomas with requests.

New Farsi, Dari, Arabic, Tamil, Burmese, Karen, and Rohinyan speaking Bilingual Community Educators (BCEs): These newly trained BCEs are ready to present an introduction to the health system to your group. Contact RHS’ Community Education Program Coordinator Lidija Sestakova.

Processing of asylum claims is starting: The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has started to remove the restrictions on applications for Protection Visas. As asylum seekers go through the refugee status determination process their eligibility to Medicare may change. NSW health staff are reminded that asylum seekers who are not Medicare-eligible qualify for a fee waiver for required public health services. If you are unsure about a patient’s eligibility contact our GP-clinic nurses.

Australian Medical Association president on health care in detention: AMA President Professor Brian Owler gave the keynote speech for the recent AMA Forum on the Health of Asylum Seekers, held in Sydney.

18 Peak Health Bodies call for Australia’s ratification of the Torture Convention, arguing this will strengthen monitoring of detention and enhance the capacity of health professionals to provide ethical and quality care. Westmead pediatrician Professor David Isaacs examines the latter in the recent Journal of Medical Ethics: ‘Are healthcare professionals working in Australia’s immigration detention centres condoning torture?’.

Ingham Institute’s Best Community Paper Award was won for Mental Health Literacy of Resettled Iraqi Refugees in NSW: Paving the way for mental health education and promotion in vulnerable communities. Congratulations to the authors: Shameran Slewa-Younan, Dr Mitchell Smith (RHS Director), and Diana Milosevic (formerly RHS).

Research on the health needs of refugees from South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, or North Sudan: University of Newcastle’s School of Nursing and Midwifery invites cross cultural and refugee health workers to participate in a study to better understand how health beliefs in African refugees impact on mental illness and health seeking behaviour. Contact Chris Kewley for more information.

New Multicultural and Refugee Health Plan for South Western Sydney (SWS): This is an important initiative, given that SWS consistently has the highest refugee settlement in the state. The committee will be chaired by Chief Executive, Amanda Larkin.

Get prepared for the National Disability Insurance Scheme: Settlement Services International (SSI) is hosting a series of forums to assist ethno-specific and multicultural organisations to better meet the unique needs of people with disability through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Contact Pascale Pias, at FutureAbility for details.

Nutrition groups in Auburn and Fairfield Local Government Areas: Promoting Healthy Outcomes for Refugees (PHOR) is offering an 8-week nutrition program for people of a refugee background. Contact a dietitian at PHOR if you have a group that would be interested.
Free yoga classes for female refugees and asylum-seekers from Bhutan, Iraq and Sri Lanka are being provided by the Refugee Yoga Project, an initiative of STARTTS and The Vasudhara Foundation. Contact Danielle Begg for more information.

Seeking Bilingual Community Educators (BCEs) to deliver Women’s Health Education programs in Arabic (Syrian), Tagalog, Hindi (Indian and Fijian) Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil, Bengali, Turkish, Spanish, Khmer, Nepali, Karen, Samoan, Korean, Dinka or Swahili. Contact Sharda Jogia on 8738 6927 at SWSLHD Health Promotion.

NSW Youth Health Access Survey seeks to find out how young people aged 12-24 access health services. Youth from a refugee background are encouraged to participate.

Australia Day honours: Congratulations to Thanh Van Nguyen OAM who has worked voluntarily with the Vietnamese community for more than 30 years, and serves as a senior case worker for the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC).

Australian Psychological Society’s Community Wellbeing Award: Congratulations to the Jesuit Refugee Services on winning the award for the support services they provide for people seeking asylum at Arrupe Place’s Shelter Project, Parramatta.

New resources

Appointment Reminder Translation Tool has been updated for imaging services: Now the appointment letter comes with translated instructions eg ‘Nothing to eat after midnight’; ‘No fasting necessary’. Simply select the ‘Imaging’ appointment type to create a translated appointment card. The card can be given to the patient face-to-face, emailed, or posted. Available in 30 languages.

New Roots Smartphone App is a free app packed with useful information for men (and women) new to Australia. Developed by Settlement Services International, it is available in English, Arabic, Farsi and Tamil. It includes information, tips, and tools on a range of topics including eating well, managing stress, relaxation, playing sports, and the health care system. Download the free app from the app store or via SSI’s website.

‘Tell Your Story’ online tool for refugee men: The Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program (UNSW) has developed the ‘Tell Your Story’ site in Farsi, Arabic and Tamil to support men overcome the stigma associated with post-traumatic stress. Alongside information and activities, the site contains a series of short videos in which men from refugee communities share positive stories of resilience and recovery. Farsi, Arabic and Tamil speakers are invited to become consultants for the project, contact 1300 130 700.

STARTTS’ Hints for Healing e-Zine is back: Targeted at those working with children and young people, the e-zine’s current issue examines the impact exposure to violence on social media can have on young people from a refugee background. This is very relevant given so many of our clients come from countries with ongoing conflict.

Talking about sexual health with people from a refugee background: RHS offers training to health staff on how to talk about sexual health in a culturally sensitive manner. Delivered by a RHS nurse with extensive experience in sexual health. To organise a session contact Nicole Dimascio or call 8778 0770.

Free Mental Health First Aid training for non-health staff working with Iraqi refugees: Maria Gabriela Uribe Guajardo (Registered Psychologist, Centre for Health Research, School of Medicine) is offering training for staff with no health background (e.g. case workers, frontline staff, admin, English tutors) wanting to assist Iraqi refugees with mental health problems. Contact Maria for details, tel 4620 3564.

Refugee Children and Families: Refugees and asylum seekers: Supporting recovery from trauma is a short easy-to-read resource on how refugee trauma may affect children and young people. Developed by Professor Louise Newman for the Trauma, Loss and Grief Network.
**Family violence against immigrant and refugee women:** Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety has released *Promoting community-led responses to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia*, a paper presenting the current knowledge about family violence against immigrant and refugee women.

**New Breastscreen resources** translated into refugee-relevant languages including Arabic, Assyrian Dari, Farsi, Karen, Nepali & Tamil. [Download online.](#)

**Multicultural NSW’s new Settlement Portal:** Accessible via a *New Arrivals to NSW* icon on the [Multicultural NSW homepage](#), the Settlement Portal offers links to useful organisations, websites and resources, to help with a range of issues including a health page.

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**Publications & research**

A sample of published articles is below. Links to abstracts are provided where full texts are not available for free.

- **Essex R (2016)** Torture, healthcare and Australian immigration detention, *J Med Ethics*[published online before print]
- **Hirani K, Payne D, Mutch R, Cherian S (2015)** Health of adolescent refugees resettling in high-income countries, *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, published online 15 October
- **Issacs D (2015)** Are healthcare professionals working in Australia's immigration detention centres condoning torture? *J Med Ethics* [published online before print]

Training and professional development

3-4 Mar 2016: Advanced Cultural Competence in Trauma Treatment for Clinicians, STARTTS one-day training with guest speaker Dr Laura S. Brown. Westmead, Sydney.

8-9 Mar 2016: Sustainable Refugee Settlement Conference. Speakers include Paris Aristotle (Foundation House), Jorge Aroche (STARTTS) and RHS’ Dr Mitchell Smith. To register call 1300 316 882 or book online. Parramatta.


30 Mar 2016: Working with Refugee Survivors of Transgenerational Trauma clinical master class, 6-8pm. Topics: ‘Trauma travels and healing happens when we know the power of story’ by Professor Judith Atkinson and ‘The transgenerational transmission of trauma: Can anyone really tell your story except you?’ by Neeraja Sanmuanthan. Attendance at STARTTS Caramar is free, or you can join online.


20 May 2016: Cultural Competence in Working with People from Refugee Backgrounds, one-day training. $149/99. STARTTS, Carramar.


5-7 May 2016: Settlement Council of Australia International Conference – Settlement and Citizenship in Civil Society. Speakers include Professor Emeritus John Berry (Department of Psychology, Queen’s University). Melbourne.

6-10 Jun 2016: International Childhood Trauma Conference. Melbourne.

7-9 Jun 2016: 15th National Immunisation Conference 2016. Themes include ‘Vaccine Preventable Diseases in special populations, including people from refugee backgrounds’. Brisbane.


20 Jun 2016: World Refugee Day

22-25 Jun 2016: World Congress of Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies, where the Refugee Trauma Recovery Program will present a research symposium. Melbourne.

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.