

The psychotherapeutic care of refugees in Cyprus

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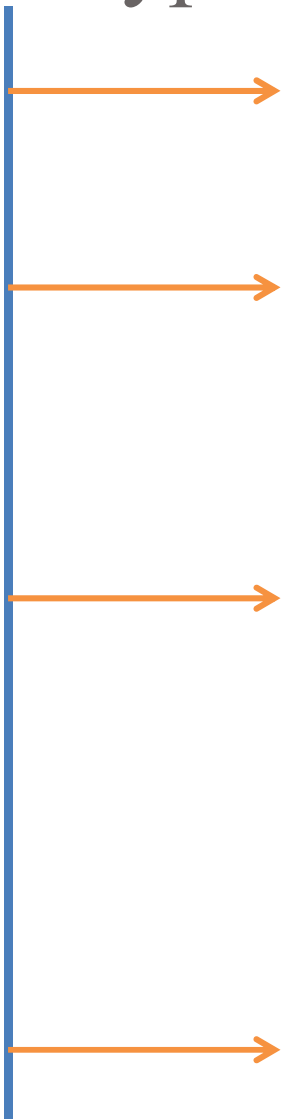


*The Kolossi high school art projects” Immigrants” has won the overall Saatchi Gallery/Deutsche Bank art prize for schools

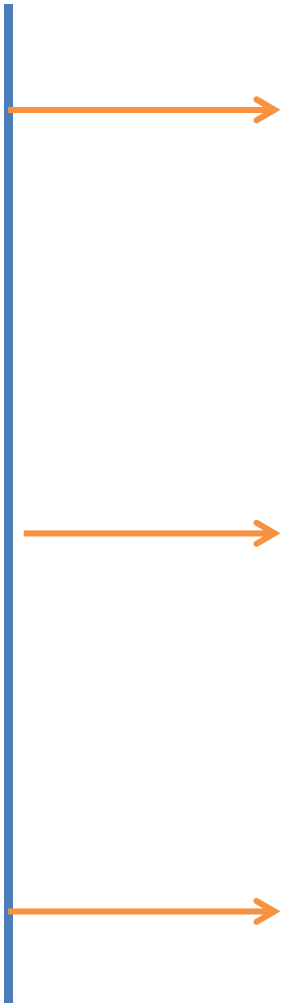
The geographic location of Cyprus: A turmoil perspective



A time line of the migration inflows to Cyprus

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- 1975–1991, Lebanese and Palestinians were the first asylum-seekers in Cyprus during the war in Lebanon
 - From time-to-time, an increased inflow of migrants followed from other Middle Eastern countries, and to a lesser extent from Africa
 - In 2010, the Ministry of the Interior estimated that there were about 40.000 undocumented migrants, mostly from Georgia, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey
 - In December 2014, 5126 refugees and 2467 asylum-seekers were residing in Cyprus

A time-line of the current issue

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- Sept. 26, 2014 the first wave of 345 refugees from Syria reached Cyprus' shore after they were saved from local cruise boat
 - Oct. ,2015 a second wave of refugees from the surrounding conflict zone-countries arrived in Cyprus
 - March 2016, an operation to find dozens of immigrants was conducted in the southern part of the island near the UN Buffer zone

Asylum and migration services in Cyprus

2
centers

Reception and
Accommodation
Center for Applicants
for International
Protection

A temporary open
reception center for
persons who are likely to
need international
protection in cases of
mass influx



Recognizing and Treating mental health problems among immigrants: A need for a framework

Risk factors for common mental health problems related to migration



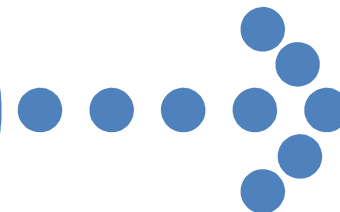
The effect of cultural influences on health and illness



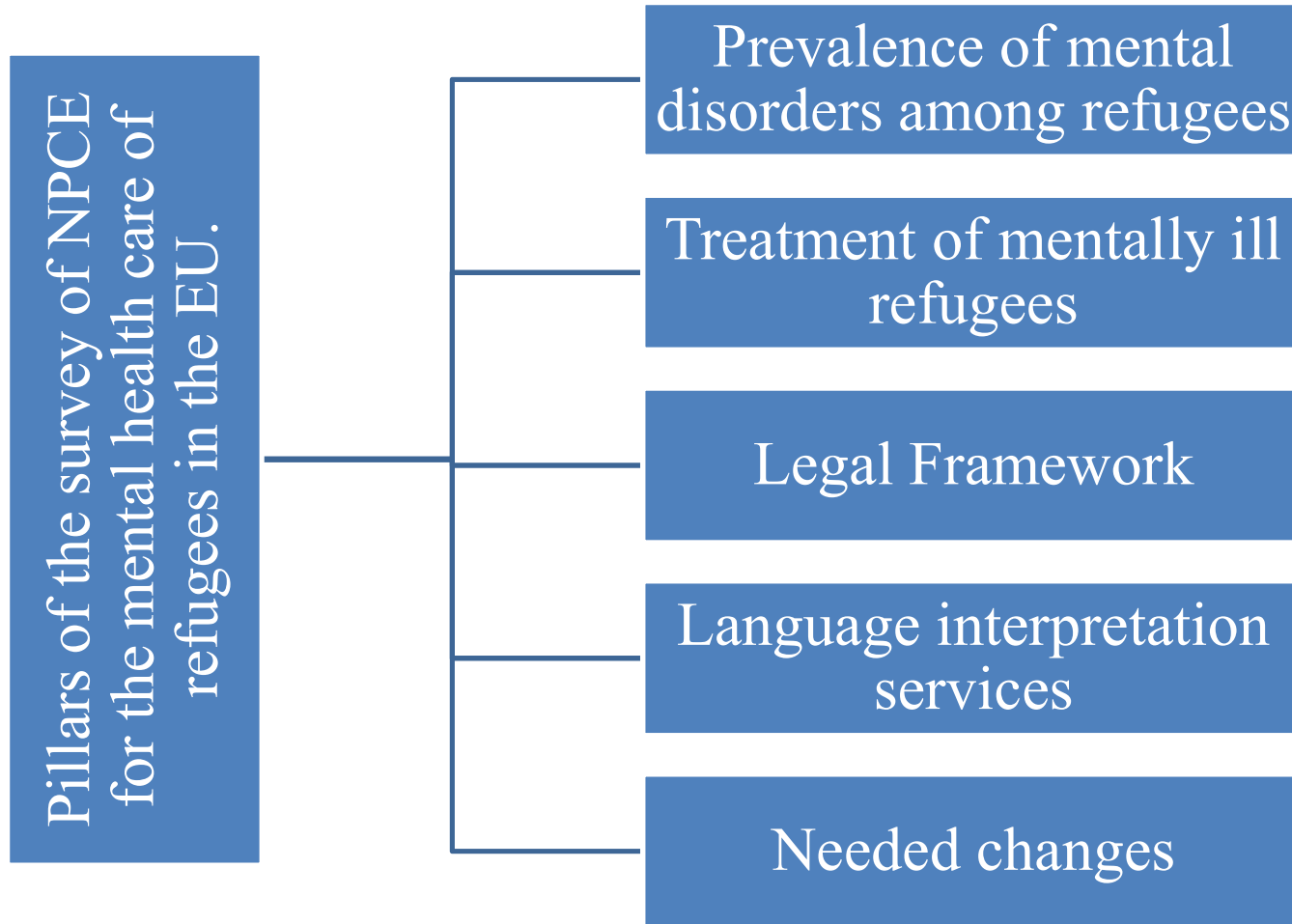
The recognition of real needs of the psychosocial support of refugees



None of them are effectively addressed in Cyprus



Cyprus



Prevalence of mental disorders among refugees in Cyprus

- No official or undocumented epidemiological studies so far
- No studies have been undertaken to examine the number of mentally ill refugees being treated in Cyprus

Treatment of mentally ill refugees

- A lot of needs from the centers
- No authorized center in Cyprus providing psychotherapeutic treatment for refugees :
 - 2 in charge Psychiatrists, 1 Clinical Psychologist, & 1 Mental Health Nurse provide care one day/week
- No treatment centers/institutes specialized for mentally ill refugees
- Refugees are referred to public mental health services:
 - Long wait-list
 - Untrained mental health staff to the needs, culture, and empirically supported intervention programs

Legal Framework

- No legally regulated framework for the psychotherapeutic care of refugees in Cyprus
- All refugees needed treatment follow the same procedures as locals islanders

Language interpretation services

- If available, migrants with a knowledge of Greek or English provide interpretation services for other migrants and mental health providers.
- If mental health providers request an interpreter, the migrant center, upon availability can offer an unofficial interpreter (this is not the case).

Problematic current practices

Refugees' psychosocial needs cannot be addressed adequately without tailoring interventions to the existing contexts:

- No assessment of the needs and plans that are feasible for each country's attitudes and influx of refugees
- A diverse mental health care provided by different aid organizations for refugees
- No empirical findings of cultural adequacy and effectiveness of existing practices

Changes needed

A need for clear working model and protocols to increase efficacy of psychological care provided & establish structure management

The development of intervention models to directly meet the psychosocial needs of refugees (both in the acute and long-term phase of humanitarian crisis)

A working model

A screening phase

- All refugees in the camps should be screened for several psychiatric disorders
- Identified cases should be thoroughly assessed

A preventive phase

- Use of empirically tested protocols to provide support for people with psychosocial problems (e.g., ACT protocol for refugee camps globally; van Ommeren, WHO, 2015)

A healing phase

- Provide empirically supported treatment for specified psychosocial problems (e.g., trauma, PTSD, depression etc.)

Thank you....

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