

What can we learn from comparing the wellbeing of newly arrived child and adolescent refugees and migrants?

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 Healthy Development Adelaide-Refugee trauma across the lifespan, 29th October, 2009

Background

- AGE
 - Typically, information from children and adolescents are pooled.
 - But they differ in

Likelihood of being born in refugee camp	Developmental tasks of their age group
Dependence on parents/guardians	Cognitive resources
Characteristics of friendships	Ability to access services

Background

- VISA CATEGORY
 - Refugees and entrants under family reunion or skilled migration programs with limited fluency in English often
 - differ in their prior experiences
 - share stressors and key concerns during resettlement:

Stressors	Key concerns
Culture shock	Housing
Language difficulties	Employment
Separation from extended family and friends	English language skills
Financial stress/loss of status	Good education for children

Participants

- NAP: Newly arrived students not fluent in English
 - Humanitarian visa: children (n=60) + adolescents (n=73)
 - Other Migrants: children (n=37) + adolescents (n=43)

		Humanitarian	Other Migrants
Children	Mean Age (yr)	9.2	9.8
	% Girls	51.5	75
	Main Countries	Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia	Taiwan, China, Brazil
Adolescents	Mean Age (yr)	14.7	15.2
	% Girls	52.7	57.7
	Main Countries	Sudan, Afghanistan, Burundi	Afghanistan, Taiwan, China

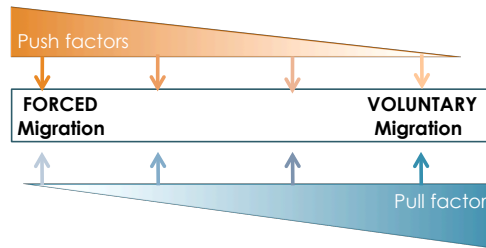
Results:

Prevalence of emotional & behavioural problems

- Most students in both visa categories and in both age group showed
 - Satisfactory academic progress
 - Good social skills
 - Levels of emotional and behavioural problems that are within the normal range for the host population
- Not a small accomplishment

Refugees and other migrants

- Forced and voluntary migration now recognised as lying on a continuum rather than being discrete categories.



Aims

- Report prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems
- Identify most common emotional and behavioural problems
- Examine relationship between problems and
 - 1 protective factor (social support)
 - 2 risk factors (negative cognitions, perceived discrimination)
 - children's acculturation style
- Examine positive outcomes:
 - Academic competence and progress,
 - School engagement
 - Social skills

Measures

Variable	Self-Reported	Teacher-Reported
PREDICTORS		
Social Support + Conflict in supportive relationships	Vaux Social Support Record	
Experience of Discrimination	Adapted from Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002	
Acculturation Style	Acculturation Attitude Scale	
OUTCOMES		
School Engagement	Subscale from Adolescence Resilience Questionnaire	
Social Skills + Academic skills		Social Skills Rating System
Emotional and Behaviour problems	Children: Dominic Interactive-Multicultural Adolescents: Youth Self Report	Teacher Report Form

- Minimum of 6 months after arrival
- Students who were still not fluent in English were assisted by:

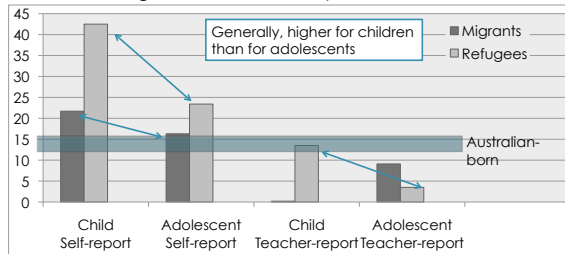
- Bilingual School Support Officers.
- Structural support
 - visual analogues,
 - rulers
 - lines between items
- Audio-visual presentation of items
 - Dominic Interactive for children



Results:

Prevalence of emotional & behavioural problems

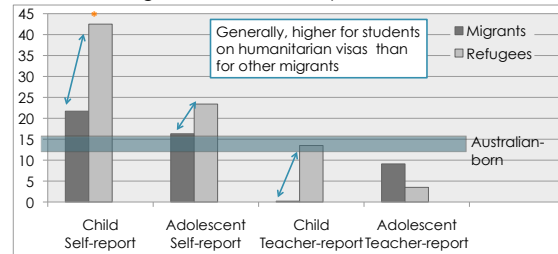
▣ % students with total problems "in the clinical range" for Western samples



Results:

Prevalence of emotional & behavioural problems

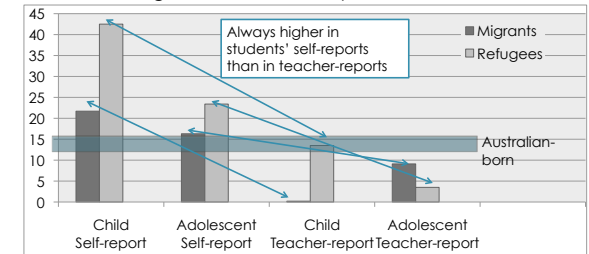
▣ % students with total problems "in the clinical range" for Western samples



Results:

Prevalence of emotional & behavioural problems

▣ % students with total problems "in the clinical range" for Western samples



Results

Most commonly reported problems

▣ Self-reported problems with highest frequency

Age	Migrants	Refugees
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid of not having friends* • Worries about one's looks* • Afraid of spiders* • Afraid of being kidnapped* • Worries about being bad at school* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miserable away from parents* • Worries about one's looks* • Afraid of bugs* • Afraid of being kidnapped* • Finds it tough to relax*
Adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretive+ • Demands attention • Withdrawn+ • Dependent^ • Lonely^ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be perfect* • Demands attention • Enjoys little+ • Fears doing bad* • Feels too guilty*

* Anxiety symptoms + Depression symptoms ^ Social problems

Predictors

▣ students with humanitarian reported higher

- ▣ perceived discrimination
 - ▣ Social support
- Than students with other migrant visas
- ▣ Example: Children

Predictor	Mean	
	Refugees	Migrants
Social support	1.9	0.4
Perceived discrimination	2.2	0.3
Conflict in supportive relationships	0.7	0.9

Results:

Relationship between "predictors" and outcomes

▣ VISA CATEGORY

- ▣ Largest predictor of self-reported total problems= visa group (humanitarian Vs other)
- ▣ >20% variance (beyond age & gender) for children and adolescents

▣ Other predictors (social support, conflict in supportive relationships, discrimination, and acculturation style)

▣ Adolescents

- ▣ Explained > 20% of variance in self-reported emotional behavioural problems for both adolescent refugees and migrants
- ▣ Explained approximately 10% of variance in academic progress for both adolescent refugees and migrants

▣ Children

- ▣ Did NOT explain the differences between individuals in any outcomes for both child migrants and refugees

Positive outcomes

▣ Teachers reported that students in both visa groups showed

- ▣ similar levels of academic progress
- ▣ moderate to high levels of social skills

▣ Students in both visa groups reported

- ▣ moderate to high levels of school engagement

Key points

▣ MOST OK

- ▣ Most children and adolescents in both visa groups showed satisfactory academic progress, good social skills and relatively few emotional and behavioural problems.
 - ▣ No small accomplishment.

▣ AGE MATTERS

- ▣ Outcomes and predictors of outcomes differed for children and adolescents.

▣ VISA CATEGORY MATTERS

- ▣ Students with humanitarian visas generally showed higher levels and different profiles for emotional and behaviour problems than other new arrived students.
 - ▣ Even when their backgrounds are similar

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