

Migrant Health during COVID-19



Special focus Workers

Technical Guidance on Promoting the Health of Labour Migrants during COVID-19 in the WHO European Region

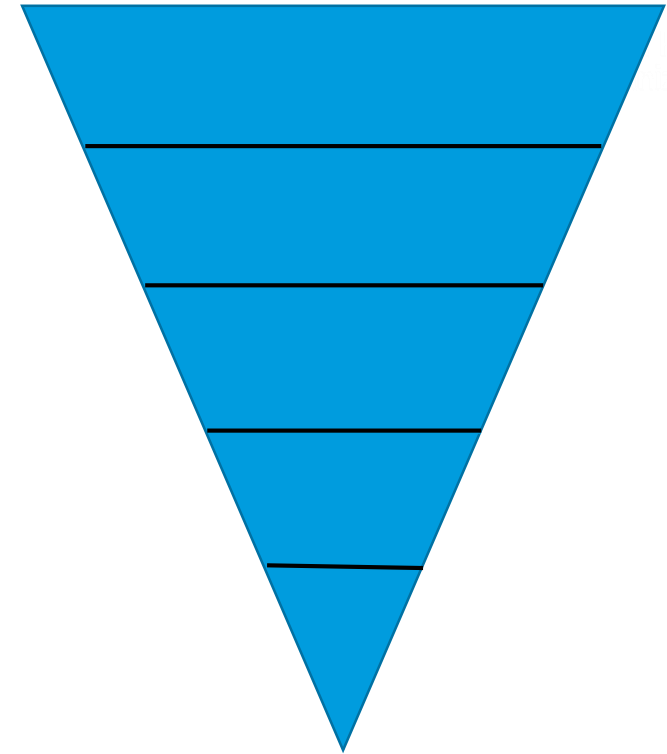
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Migration and Health Nexus

Migration and Health Nexus

- Globally there is an estimated 272 million international migrants, most of whom are economic migrants
- 10% of the population in the WHO European region is a migrant, accounting for approx. 96 million people
- Migrants can be among the most vulnerable members of society
- Migratory process - departure, transit and destination - can impact both physical and mental health
- Migration is a social determinant of health, and interacts with other factors:



Migration and COVID-19. Current situation

Migration and COVID-19. Current Situation

- Slight increase in numbers of arrivals in the Region within the last months. Normal summer fluctuation due to favourable travel conditions.
- 2020 has seen very low numbers in arrivals, especially during the Spring. Closure of borders, disembarkation procedures impacted and restrictions in general.
- 2020 numbers are still far lower than previous years. Only around 10% compared to 2016.
- No reported cases in the refugee and migrant community during the Spring 2020. Communication strategy to avoid attention and stigmatization.
- Virus spread through community transmission -> refugees and migrants are also affected, and may be particularly vulnerable.
- Confirmed cases now in Moria Camp, Greece (returning refugee to camp) and in Serbia, sick migrant was identified on route despite severe symptoms.
- Migrant workers may feel forced to travel despite illness, restrictions and other policy changes.

Introducing the Technical Guidance for Promoting the Health of Migrant Workers during COVID-19 in the WHO European Region

WHO COVID-19 Resources

1. [Interim guidance for refugee and migrant health in relation to COVID-19 in the WHO European Region – March 2020](#)
2. [Preparedness, prevention and control of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) for refugees and migrants in non-camp settings – interim guidance by WHO and Inter-Agency Standing Committee – April 2020](#)
3. [Considerations for public health and social measures in the workplace in the context of COVID-19 – May 2020](#)
4. [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak: rights, roles and responsibilities of health workers, including key considerations for occupational safety and health – March 2020](#)
5. [Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak - March 2020](#)
6. [Considerations for quarantine of individuals in the context of containment for coronavirus COVID-19](#)

Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers' Health

Health of International Migrant Workers – what the evidence shows

General Overview



Photo by [Liam Martens](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- Labour migrants are generally young, fit and healthy at the start of their migrant journey
- Can be employed in low-skill, informal, temporary work or in high skilled professional roles
- Many migrant workers are **employed in high risk and hazardous sectors** such as construction, mining, agriculture and health care
- More likely to work in **exploitative conditions**, and have a high burden of **physical and psychiatric morbidity**, including **accidents and injury**



Impact of COVID-19 on International Migrant Workers

- Employment status/ income
- Legal status
- Access to health services for continuing health needs
- Increased risk of infection depending on the line of work and accommodation situation i.e transport services, domestic work, long-term care, healthcare sectors.
- Food and housing security
- Adequate WASH

Guidelines and Recommendations for Promoting Migrant Workers' Health during COVID-19

Targeted advocacy towards Government authorities and policy makers

- 1) Ensure **equitable access to healthcare and health information** to all migrants, regardless of status, age, ethnicity, sex, and gender.
- 2) **Disease control measures** targeting migrant worker communities **should adhere to WHO guidelines and not violate human rights**.
- 3) **Collection of disaggregated data by migrant status** to better understand the impact of the pandemic on migrant populations, including labour migrants.
- 4) Actively **prevent and reduce stigmatization and discrimination** against migrant workers through rights-based approaches and positive messaging.
- 5) Leverage **community-based networks and leaders** to disseminate COVID-19 related information in **culturally and linguistically appropriate manners** among migrant worker communities.

Guidelines and Recommendations for Promoting Labour Migrant Health during COVID-19

Targeted advocacy towards Healthcare authorities

Train healthcare workers on migrant-sensitive approaches to be able to recognize the different vulnerabilities of migrant workers.

Targeted advocacy towards Employers and workers' organizations

- 1) Protect the occupational health and safety of migrant workers by recognizing their different vulnerabilities to COVID-19 in various occupational settings.
- 2) Educate and train workers and supervisors on how to reduce the spread of COVID-19 as well as their rights.

Case Study Examples

COVID-19 Unemployment Payment

Ireland introduced a weekly COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment for people aged 18-66 who lost employment due to the pandemic. This policy also covers regular and irregular migrant workers in the country.



Cross border support for migrant workers

Embassies and community organization are also important stakeholders in ensuring the health of migrant workers. The Council for Assistance to Migrants was formed by representatives from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to support migrant workers in Russia with food, shelter, medicine and counselling services.



Additional Recommendations

- Increasing the capacity for COVID-19 testing and health screening, including for departing and returning labour migrants



Additional Considerations

- Address the migration related push factors:
 - Increased investment in training programs for skills and education of labour migrants, youth and women
- Strengthening health system resilience



Migration and Health Programme Overview

Migration and Health Programme: Overview



Knowledge Production and
Evidence



Country Support



Policy and Advocacy

Strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region



SEVENTY-SECOND WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Agenda item 12.4

A72/25 Rev.1
23 May 2019

Promoting the health of refugees and migrants

Draft global action plan, 2019–2023

Report by the Director-General

1. The Executive Board at its 144th session, in January 2019, considered and noted an earlier version of this report,¹ which has been extensively revised in light of the discussion at the Board.

2. At its 140th session in January 2017 the Executive Board in decision EB140(9) on promoting the health of refugees and migrants requested the Director-General, inter alia, to prepare, in full consultation and cooperation with Member States and, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations, and in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant stakeholders, a draft framework of priorities and guiding principles to promote the health of refugees and migrants. The framework should be a resource for Member States in meeting the health needs of refugees and migrants and contributing to the achievement of the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. In May 2017, the Health Assembly in resolution WHA70.15 on promoting the health of refugees and migrants noted with appreciation the framework of priorities and guiding principles and urged Member States, in accordance with their national contexts, priorities and legal frameworks, inter alia to strengthen international cooperation on the health of refugees and migrants in line with paragraphs 11 and 68 and other relevant paragraphs of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.² In addition, the Health Assembly requested the Director-General, inter alia, to identify best practices, experiences and lessons learned on the health of refugees and migrants in each region in order to contribute to the development of a draft global action plan on the health of refugees and migrants for consideration by the Seventy-second World Health Assembly. A version of the draft plan was considered by the Executive Board at its 144th session,³ and a revised text is submitted in this document.

¹ See document EB144/27 and the provisional summary records of the Executive Board at its 144th session, thirteenth meeting.

² United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/1 (2016). New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (<http://undocs.org/a/res/71/1>, accessed 20 March 2019).

³ Contained in document EB144/27. For purposes of clarity, this global action plan on the health of refugees and migrants is voluntary; its acceptance by the Health Assembly would not change the voluntary nature of the plan. The plan is intended solely for the Secretariat and will not have any financial implications for Member States. The Secretariat will provide support to Member States only upon request and in accordance with national legislation and country contexts.

Key Guiding Documents

1) Strategy and action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region (2016)

- Regional level
- 9 strategic areas, and priority actions to address the public health and health system challenges related to migration
- In line with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2) Draft global action plan, 2019-2023 , on promoting the health of refugees and migrants (2019)

- Global level
- In cooperation with Member States, IOM, UNHCR and relevant stakeholders
- In line with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Knowledge Production and Evidence

Country Assessments



Evidence and Guidance

- HEN reports
- Technical guidance
- Policy briefs
- Multiagency technical guidance
- The ***Report on the health of refugees and migrants in the WHO European Region***



Knowledge Hub on Health and Migration

Biennial Summit
Policy dialogue
Flagship Courses/Summer Schools
Webinars on health challenges faced by migrants and the host populations
Knowledge repository



Technical Guidance Series



Aim: To inform and provide technical guidance or advice to policymakers and decision-makers on the substantive areas of migration and health

Recurring themes:

- People-centered principles (access, entitlements, utilization and quality of care)
- Prioritizing community centered approaches that build local capacities
- Integrating diversity-sensitive and health equity focused policies and practices throughout health and social services

Thank you



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