



victorian refugee
health network



Primary Care Forum

Thursday 27 August 2015

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Summary

The second Victorian Refugee Health Network (the Network) Primary Care Forum was held on Thursday 27 August 2015 at Foundation House in Brunswick.

The Primary Care Forum was developed in 2014 in response to the increasing interest and growing size of the Network's Primary Care Working Group. The annual Primary Care Forum allows the Network and its primary care activities to remain flexible and responsive to the changing context and needs of the sector.

The 2015 forum was planned with input from a small advisory group and the Network team would like to thank Dr Joanne Gardiner, Maria Nicolaou, Dr Mark Timlin, Tim Andrews and Lindy Marlow for their contributions.

The forum brought together sixty primary health care practitioners including GPs and Refugee Health Nurses, specialist services, settlement and asylum seeker support services, policy makers and researchers from both metropolitan and regional Victoria.

The objectives of the forum were:

- To facilitate an interface between primary care practitioners, specialist healthcare providers, researchers and policy makers
- To share models of practice, identify issues and solutions for addressing the health care needs of people of refugee backgrounds, including asylum seekers
- To provide a formal setting for ideas sharing, learning and developing connections with others undertaking similar work

To achieve these objectives, the forum featured presentations from a range of speakers on diverse topics including community perspectives and experiences of primary care; clinical updates, including immunisation; and a panel discussion that showcased a range of initiatives and allowed for discussion of common approaches, strategies and challenges when working with people from refugee backgrounds, including those seeking asylum. Copies of available presentations are included in this report.

Participants then choose from one of three interactive workshops including: refugee children and mental health; approaches to ongoing pain presentations in people seeking asylum and people of refugee background; and the impact of legislative changes on people seeking asylum: a mental health perspective. A brief summary of these discussions have been included and presentations where possible.

Throughout the day, participants were asked to contribute to a mapping exercise that identified general practices that they refer to in their area who conduct refugee health assessments, use interpreters or have bilingual or multilingual staff. A poster session was held during the lunch break and allowed further work to be showcased, and participants were encouraged to make new connections throughout the day.

Evaluation results indicated that 83% of respondents rated the forum 'very good' overall and 17% rated it 'good'. Key themes from the evaluations indicated that participants found the diverse range of presentations and discussions beneficial, particularly the panel discussion, and the networking opportunities.

Participant List

Name	Organisation
Josie McMahon	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre [ASRC]
Sheenagh McShane	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre [ASRC]
Genevieve Napper	Australian College of Optometry
Lauren Kharsas	Australian College of Optometry
Heather Roydhouse	Barwon Health
Jade Mitchell	Barwon Health
Nicholas Silberstein	Brunswick Betta Health
Bernice Murphy	Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health [CEH]
Ambi Kaur	cohealth
Buddini Ekanayake	cohealth
Dr Rowena Ryan	cohealth
John Scopel	cohealth
Alistair Sandison	Department of Health & Human Services
Crystal Russell	Department of Health & Human Services
Deborah Hubbard	Department of Health & Human Services
Marcela Nunez	Department of Health & Human Services
Shauna Jones	Department of Health & Human Services
Ann Elkins	Eastern Access Community Health [EACH]
Jeanette Nortcliffe	Eastern Access Community Health [EACH]
Kate Temby	Eastern Melbourne PHN
Cinzia Theobald	enliven (PCP)
Me'ad Assan	Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
Catherine Orr	Gateway Health
Penny Wilson	Gateway Health
Alistair McKeown	ISIS Primary Care
Amelia McDermott	ISIS Primary Care
Natalie Henry	ISIS Primary Care
Sarah Chong	ISIS Primary Care
Lara Ghobrial	Life Without Barriers
Nicole Head	Life Without Barriers
Jacque McBride	Monash Health

Kathi Rule	Monash Health
Suzanne Willey	Monash University
Kate Russo	Networking Health Victoria
Sally Nelson	Office of Multicultural Affairs & Citizenship [OMAC]
Kiran Virik	Plenty Valley Community Health [PVCH]
Linny Phuong	The Water Well Project
Lindy Marlow	cohealth
Melanie Block	cohealth
Meryllyn Spratling	Eastern Access Community Health [EACH]
Anne O'Connor	Foundation House
Dr Radhika Santhanam-Martin	Foundation House
Heidi Wegner	Foundation House
Lauren Tyrrell	Victorian Refugee Health Network, Foundation House
Philippa Duell-Piening	Victorian Refugee Health Network, Foundation House
Samantha Furneaux	Victorian Refugee Health Network, Foundation House
Sue Casey	Foundation House
Therese Meehan	Foundation House
Debbie Hocking	Howard Florey Institute
Mark Timlin	Monash Health
Rob Koch	Monash Health
Tim Andrews	Primary Care Connect
Georgie Paxton	Royal Children's Hospital
Joanne Gardiner	Royal Melbourne Hospital / cohealth / Foundation House
Kate Maloney	Sunraysia Community Health Services
Waan Tardif	VICSEG / Wyndham City Council
Nadia Chaves	Victorian Infectious Diseases Service, The Royal Melbourne Hospital



Primary Health Care Forum Program

Thursday 27th August 2015

Foundation House, 4 Gardiner Street, Brunswick 3056

9.00	Registrations		
9.15	Welcome and house-keeping	Chair: Tim Andrews Manager Refugee Health Services/Counsellor Advocate Primary Care Connect, Shepparton	
9.30	Keynote presentation <u>Community perspectives and experiences</u>	Waan Tardif Bicultural Support Officer and Refugee Family Mentor; Wyndham City Council and VICSEG New Futures	
10.15	Keynote presentation <i>Clinical issue and guidelines</i>	Dr Nadia Chaves Refugee Health Fellow, Infectious Disease Physician; Melbourne Health, cohealth	
11:00	Morning tea and activity		
11.30	Presentation <u>Immunisation update</u>	Merilyn Spratling Refugee Health Nurse Practitioner; EACH	
12.00	Interactive panel discussion <i>Showcasing initiatives, approaches and challenges</i> Chair: Sue Casey, Manager Health Sector Development, Foundation House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob Koch: <u>Monash Health Social Inclusion/Concierge Program</u> • Dr Debbie Hocking: <u>Mental Health screening for asylum seekers by non-health professionals</u> • Kate Maloney: Rural/Regional Refugee Health Nursing • Dr Mark Timlin: <u>engaging general practice</u> 	
1.00	Lunch and networking - Poster session and facilitated networking activity		
2.00	Concurrent workshops		
	A	B	C
	Facilitators: Dr Radhika Santhanam-Martin	Facilitators: Anne O'Connor, Foundation House	Facilitators: Heidi Wegner, Melanie Block and Dr Joanne Gardiner
	Theme: Refugee children and mental health	Theme: The impact of legislative changes on asylum seekers: a mental health perspective	Theme: Approaches to ongoing pain presentations in asylum seekers and people of refugee background
3.30	Afternoon tea		
3.45	Plenary <i>Report back from workshops</i>	Tim Andrews	
4.30	Close		

Workshop Summaries

The afternoon workshops allowed for interactive and detailed discussion about particular areas of interest. A brief summary of the themes are provided below.

Refugee children and mental health: Dr Radhika Santhanam-Martin

Key themes from this workshop included:

- *Multiple narratives*
 - Psychological and psychiatric assessment is useful for diagnosis purposes; however this is only a fraction of the story.
 - There is a need for social determinants, anthropology, social sciences, cultural and legal studies for a broader understanding of refugee children's mental health.
 - Role confusion
 - Normality versus abnormality
 - Power versus powerlessness
 - Tolerance for uncertainty
- *Displacement produces rupture*
 - Spatial; temporal; cultural; emotional.
- *No one size fits all*
 - Work in a variety of ways is required that considers the family's explanatory model of mental health.
 - Tolerance for a variety of 'truths'.
 - Place high value on networks and attachments, not just the treatment dyad.



The impact of legislative changes on asylum seekers: a mental health perspective: Anne O'Connor

This workshop included an update of recent policy changes related to people seeking asylum and who arrived by boat between 13 August 2012 and 1 January 2014. Changes to processing that were outlined included the fast track processing system and the reintroduction of Temporary Protection Visas and the development of Safe Haven Enterprise Visas.

Themes that resonated with the group included:

- The importance of being realistic and honest with clients so as not to give false hope.
- Reassurance that this area is complex and characterised by ongoing change. We don't need to know everything, we just need to know where to go for information.
- The importance of finding spaces with our clients where we can be effective.

The following resources and readings were circulated to the group:

Coffey, GJ.; Kaplan, I.; Sampson, RC.; Tucci, MM. 2010, 'The meaning and mental health consequences of long-term immigration detention for people seeking asylum', in *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol 70, pp. 2070-2079

Lee, Poh Lin (2013) 'Making now precious: narrative conversations with asylum seekers', *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, no. 1 March 2013, pp. 1-8

Refugee Advice and Casework Service, 2015, *The Migration Amendment (Protection and other measures) Bill 2014*, <http://www.racs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/RACS-FACT-SHEET-The-Migration-Amendment-Protection-and-Other-Measures-Bill-2015-26-March-2015.pdf>



Approaches to ongoing pain presentations in asylum seekers and people of refugee background: Melanie Block, Heidi Wegner and Dr Joanne Gardiner

Three facilitators with unique perspectives explored approaches to ongoing pain presentations. This included an introduction to pain presentations and the connection between the biological, social and psychological, particularly for people from refugee backgrounds including asylum seekers. The session included:

- An overview of the cohealth Chronic Pain Program that involves a coordinated and multidisciplinary team that includes counselling, physiotherapy, Living Well and Massage for clients from refugee backgrounds with ongoing pain. This program is based on shared values, team knowledge and skills and a coordinated approach to logistics.
- An overview of pain as part of the Complementary Therapies Program at Foundation House included discussion about the embodiment of grief and fear. Massage therapy and the use of herbs was explored as a therapeutic, holistic approach to working with people who have experienced torture and trauma and who experience ongoing pain.
- An exploration of the meanings of pain; triggers and appropriate assessment tools and treatment approaches including acupuncture, cupping, dance, spirituality and music.

