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23rd WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS



Mental health and interventions for child and adolescent refugees

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Children and adolescents in developing countries are exposed to war trauma and conflicts yet there are limited country resources to provide them with mental health support. Interventions are needed to reach the largest number of child and adolescent refugees possible, and while many international organizations offer psychosocial and mental health support, the evidence for their programming is, at best, limited. There is also an urgent need to promote and conduct research at a local level using sound scientific methods in order to build evidence for what works and what does not. This lecture will draw on field experiences in researching the impact of 3 separate wars on child mental health, illustrating with data from prospective studies as well as controlled interventions, highlighting challenges encountered and discussing unique opportunities for the advancement of knowledge emanating from real world refugee settings. Resilience-building interventions for refugee children and their families will be discussed, including a school-based teacher-mediated resilience building intervention targeting students, and a positive-parenting intervention that can be administered by lay (non-mental health) workers targeting parents. Governments, international child and adolescent psychiatry associations as well as international and national NGOs are urged to exert concerted efforts to promote collection of evidence for interventions for refugee populations.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

Identify mental health needs of refugee child and adolescent populations



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Identify challenges in collecting evidence of efficacy of interventions for child and adolescent refugees and their families

Advocate for the need to collect evidence for interventions targeting refugee populations

References:

1. [Resilience-promoting factors in war-exposed adolescents: an epidemiologic study.](#)

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Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2017 Feb;26(2):191-200. doi: 10.1007/s00787-016-0871-0.

2. [Displaced Children: The Psychological Implications.](#)

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3. [Outcome of depression and anxiety after war: a prospective epidemiologic study of children and adolescents.](#)

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