



RESPOND Newsletter

Welcome to the Newsletter of the research project RESPOND.

The aim of the project, which is funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), is to improve the evidence base for refugee health service provision in Germany. The project covers five years (2016-2021) and nine work packages, in which we investigate important research questions using qualitative, quantitative and routine data sources.

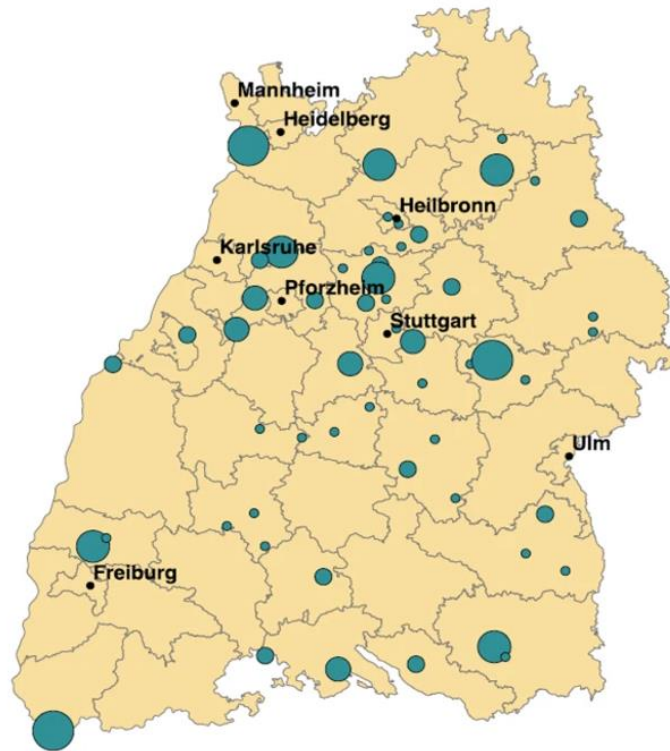
This issue of the newsletter focuses on health monitoring among refugees. Health monitoring serves as the foundation for planning needs-based care. Ensuring adequate medical care for refugees does not only make economic sense, but is also a humanitarian duty. However, compared to the general population, health monitoring among refugees raises a number of challenges. One problem is the fragmentation of care in different accommodation settings. Initial reception centres usually offer primary healthcare services on-site, while refugees in regional accommodation often have to travel long distances to the nearest doctor or hospital. A further issue is the selection of participants for health monitoring surveys, as this population is subject to constant change. Especially in the first few months, refugees often have to change their place of residence within or between federal states. In addition, language is another hurdle for data collection within this population.

Below, we present the results of a health monitoring study carried out within as part of RESPOND, which tested approaches to health monitoring among refugees with respect to their feasibility. We also report first results from our nationwide data collection in the psychosocial centres and invite you to an event where we will present further results from our health monitoring research.

Please feel free to forward this email to interested colleagues; these can then subscribe using the form on our website.

Kind regards,

Prof. Dr. Kayvan Bozorgmehr (*principal investigator*)
and Louise Biddle, M.Sc. (*research coordinator*)
and Maren Hintermeier (*research assistant*)



RESPOND study on health monitoring among refugees

In order to close gaps in current health monitoring approaches, we collected data on important health indicators for refugees from across Baden-Württemberg in spring 2018. The cross-sectional study recorded the health status, access to health care and socio-demographic data of the participants through a questionnaire, which was translated into nine languages in advance and checked for comprehensibility by refugees. In order to ensure that the data collected were representative, a random sample of 1% of the refugees in Baden-Württemberg was drawn on the basis of information on refugee accommodation. The personal and multilingual approach of the data collection yielded a good response rate of 41.7%, and a comparability of the participants with the asylum application figures of the federal state regarding age, gender and nationality. Overall, the burden of disease was high, particularly in relation to chronic diseases, pain and mental illness. Higher use of general medicine and specialised care is reported by older, chronically ill participants, indicating needs-based access compared to those reporting less health care needs. However, there are problems with access to care in rural areas. The study also shows possible gaps in quality of care. Overall, the study demonstrates that the collection of valid and reliable data is feasible for population groups traditionally considered "hard-to-reach" and can provide important insights for the planning of needs-based care. The full text version of the article can be found [here](#).



First results from the psychosocial centres

Due to their experiences before, during and after flight, refugees have a higher burden of mental illness than the general population. However, a data gap means that we cannot currently compare the mental health needs of refugees with their access to care. In cooperation with the Federal Association of Psychosocial Centres for Refugees and Torture Victims (BAfF), a nationwide survey of refugees in psychosocial centres was conducted using the instruments of the RESPOND survey. 121 refugees from 15 psychosocial centres took part in the study. First results show a higher health burden for the clients of the psychosocial centres compared to the population-based RESPOND survey, not only for mental health, but also physical complaints. Despite access to health care services through the psychosocial centres, embedding persons with primary health care needs into regular care structures proved difficult. Further statistical evaluations will be conducted to investigate these trends in detail. The full text version of the article can be found [here](#).

Event: „Research project RESPOND: results from a health monitoring study on health and health care among refugees in Baden-Württemberg”

Date: 3. March 2020 (10:30 – 15:00), Venue: Ministry of the Interior, Digitalisation and Migration Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart

The research project RESPOND has focused on the health care of refugees and the identification of barriers and enablers to care within the health system since 2016. In this event, we will present results of our research, with a particular focus on access to care in regional accommodation settings. We will discuss emerging insights and derive courses of action for the improvement of health and access to health services for refugees. This event is aimed at regional health care authorities responsible for the housing of refugees at a communal level, as well as local public health authorities. Please register your interest in this event with Louise Biddle (louise.biddle@med.uni-heidelberg.de). More details regarding the event will follow early next year.

Vacancy: PhD Position with RESPOND – Implementation of innovative health care models for refugees in Germany

We are looking for a motivated graduate to join our team from March 2020 for the second phase of RESPOND (piloting and evaluation of interventions). The successful candidate will support the design, implementation and evaluation of community-based care models for refugees. Application closes on 20. December 2019. The full job description and further details can be found [here](#).