RESPOND

Improving regional health system responses
to the challenges of forced migration
#6 – 12/2021

RESPOND Newsletter #6

Welcome to the latest newsletter of the RESPOND research project,

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. In the first phase of the project, we investigated important research questions using qualitative, quantitative and routine data sources. Based on this, we identified possible interventions to overcome barriers to care in the health care of refugees in a tailoring process. In the second study phase, which ends in October 2022, we will further test selected interventions and evaluate existing low-threshold approaches.

In this issue of the newsletter, we would like to inform you about selected interventions and provide a brief overview of our activities in the past year.

We would like to thank everyone who supported us over the past year. We wish you all happy holidays, a good start into the new year and above all good health. Finally, we would like to draw your attention to our planned RESPOND event.

Best regards from Heidelberg

Prof. Kayvan Bozorgmehr, M.Sc. (principal investigator),
Andreas W. Gold, M.Sc. (project coordination)
and the entire research team

Intervention approaches to improve health care for refugees

The results of the needs assessment within the RESPOND project show a need for change and potential for improvement in various areas. In the remaining project period, we will mainly focus on three aspects:

1. models of outreach and migration-sensitive health education and information. We are currently conducting a nationwide survey among project leaders on the most important features of approaches in this area in terms of content and structure.

2. Non-physician health professionals in the health care of refugees. Internationally, there are positive experiences with so-called Refugee Health Nurses. Comparable non-physician care approaches also exist to some extent in Germany, but scientific evidence is still lacking. We are working on a first comparative case study on these models of care in Germany.

3. improving the data basis for local care planning. Based on the quantitative survey in RESPOND and other data sources, an interactive online tool (RESPOND-INTENT) was developed. The tool provides an estimation of general health needs, psychosocial needs, and the frequency of cardiovascular diseases among refugees at a district level in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg. The data are weighted by age, gender and region of origin. The RESPOND-INTENT intervention was piloted in a qualitative interview and usability study. Important insights can now be incorporated in the revision of the online tool as well as in future scientific communication with decision-makers.

The RESPOND project in 2021

In 2021, we were once again able to share and discuss our research results with the public. The close cooperation with many different actors is particularly important for us and always very rewarding.

On 23 March 2021, we held a virtual conference with over 120 participants, allowing us to present and discuss many of our findings from the RESPOND project. The documentation and further materials on the event are available online on our homepage https://respond-study.org/events/. In November, we participated in the fourth Community Health Conference at the 'Hochschule für Gesundheit' in Bochum with a session on "Refugee Health".

Moreover, we have published the results of our various research activities in the following publications:

A paper by Amir Mohsenpour, Louise Biddle, Katja Krug and Kayvan Bozorgmehr describes the possibility of measuring the living environment using a multidimensional assessment index and its validation in a shared accommodation for refugees. The article is available online at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100725

Louise Biddle, Maren Hintermeier, Amir Mohsenpour, Matthias Sand and Kayvan Bozorgmehr describe the procedure and key results of the population-based RESPOND survey in an article for the Journal of Health Monitoring of the Robert Koch Institute: https://edoc.rki.de/handle/176904/8657.

The same issue also contains an article by our sister project PriCare on Health monitoring of refugees in reception centres for asylum seeker and the structure of a decentralized surveillance network for the analysis of routine medical data: https://edoc.rki.de/handle/176904/8658

Findings from the implementation of a group-based peer approach in a local setting to promote the mental health of refugees have been summarised by Clara Perplies, Louise Biddle, Janine Benson-Martin, Brigitte Joggerst and Kayvan Bozorgmehr: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11553-021-00899-w [German only]

In a discussion paper, Sandra Ziegler and Kayvan Bozorgmehr explore the question of whether social categorisation processes influence the health care of refugees. This paper discusses whether the "perspective of staying" has an influence on decisions and can possibly be seen as a new social determinant of health: https://doi.org/10.5771/2509-9485-2021-2-309 [German only]

In addition, we publish contributions in the **Health Equity Studies & Migration - Report Series** (http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/view/collections/c-56.html), including the results of a quantitative survey among social workers on their perception of health care for refugees (https://doi.org/10.11588/heidok.00030262) [German only].

A policy brief on the electronic health insurance card for asylum seekers was also published in this series. The policy brief summarises the state of knowledge on the effects of the introduction of the electronic health insurance card for asylum seekers until June 2021. It presents empirical findings on the effects of the electronic health insurance card on the utilisation of health services, on health outcomes as well as on costs and administrative processes (https://doi.org/10.11588/heidok.00030347) [German only].

Save the Date: Final Conference of the RESPOND Project

We are planning to hold the final conference of the RESPOND project on 09th November 2022, docked as a pre-conference to the 15th European Public Health Conference in Berlin (https://ephconference.eu/Berlin-2022-290).

Due to the imponderables of pandemic developments, the date and venue may still be subject to change - we will of course keep you up to date.