



The *Refugee Health and Integration Survey (ReHIS)* collects primary data on psychosocial conditions and mental health of Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees who have arrived in Austria since 2011. Additionally, access and barriers to public facilities, i.e. care and counseling services for health and integration, are surveyed. Thereby, *ReHIS* aims to investigate the reciprocal effect between the structural (i.e. economic), social, and cultural integration of refugees and their psychosocial health.

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Background

Since 2015, Austria has been one of the EU countries that received the highest number of forced migrants in relation to its population. Between July and December 2015, 60,000 asylum applications were filed in Austria, amounting to 89,000 by the end of the year (including resettlement), which corresponds to about 1% of the total population. Central to the participation of refugees and persons under subsidiary protection in the host society is to enable them to become economically independent by fostering rapid and sustainable integration into the labor market. Here, refugees' mental and physical health plays a central, but little investigated role; indeed, successful labor market integration is not limited to structural aspects, such as the existence of diplomas or language certificates, but also depends upon personal and psychosocial factors. These include, among others, mental health, subjective well-being, restrictions of physical activity, discrimination experiences, and consequences of war or flight experiences, e.g. depression, anxiety and stress symptoms, as well as evidence of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Objective

ReHIS aims to provide evidence-based insights to support the social, cultural and economic integration of refugees in Austria. For the first time, refugees of the increased migration inflows since 2011 will be surveyed for mental health, in particular affective disorders, thus informing support services and providing a basis for estimating future burdens on the Austrian health and social system. Potentials for the optimization of universal care ('Grundversorgung') and thus cost savings will be shown; inadequate privacy, hygiene or security during the asylum application phase can lead to higher follow-up costs (tertiary costs) by reinforcing existing stress symptoms, which require specialist psychological support.

ReHIS also generates data on refugees' access to public health and integration services and identifies the potential for low-threshold, target-group appropriate infrastructure in order to promote well-being, performance and agency and thus integration into all dimensions of Austrian society. The data collected should serve as a basis for specifically targeted integration strategies to improve knowledge of and access to public health facilities.

Cooperation

ReHIS builds on the pilot study "[Displaced Persons in Austria Survey \(DiPAS\)](#)", the first social science survey on asylum seekers and refugees in 2015 in Europe, and cooperates as an interim survey with a large panel study on labor market integration in Vienna and selected federal states (starting in December 2017). Combined with the resulting longitudinal data on labor market integration, *ReHIS* allows for a unique analysis of refugee integration in key dimensions.

Cooperation partners

Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw)

Department of Human Resource Management, Karl-Franzens-University Graz

International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

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