

## Trauma and disease-the context of organized violence and flight

The purpose of my study, done 2001, is to examine the relationship between traumatic events during war, exposure to very special living conditions in the host country Germany and mental health of refugees from Kosovo.

Although research has established that refugees are more prone to psychiatric illnesses than the general population, little has been written about the refugees from Kosovo living in Germany.

Methods: A total of 100 refugees were randomly selected from Refugee camps in Germany. The Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25 were used to assess levels of traumatization and mental health status. Typical of refugees of war and persecution, participants reported suffering a large number of various traumas. Children specific symptoms are regarded as well as gender specific symptoms and experiences. The prevalence rates of anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder are described, compared and linked with social environmental experiences during resettlement in Germany. Exposure – response relationships are investigated by different methods.

The interactions on the mental health and social functioning subscales are investigated and the challenge for public health is described. Protective and risk factors that may affect the manifestation of mental illness symptoms after exposure to organized violence are highlighted.

Conclusions: Mental health related to experiences of war and violence need to be adressed from a Public Health perspective to enable a stable and productive environment. Some of the most important factors in producing psychological morbidity in refugees are investigated. These factors may be alleviated by planned, integrated rehabilitation and policy programmes.