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## **Abstract**

### **Background**

The number of asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people worldwide is continually growing. Alongside this, increasingly restrictive policies are being developed, limiting access to support and healthcare and also enforcing detention and destitution on those seeking asylum in the U.K. The adverse effects these policies have on a person's emotional and psychological health can cause further distress to this population who have already experienced overwhelming trauma.

### **Aim**

The aim of this study is to examine and critically review the literature addressing the emotional and psychological needs of people seeking asylum in the U.K.

### **Method**

A critical review was conducted of the literature which investigated the impact which seeking asylum has upon emotional and psychological wellbeing. A search of online databases and a manual search of reference lists, journals and websites was conducted in order to produce a condensed summary of the events experienced by those seeking asylum, their effects and therefore needs.

### **Results**

The overall findings suggest that the emotional and psychological needs of people seeking asylum are complex in nature and far greater than the U.K. health services currently provide for. Distress is caused by a combination of the experiences of extreme events pre migration, the dangers and anxiety of flight, and the ongoing stresses of life in the U.K.

## **Conclusion**

The work being done by the voluntary and community services is helping to address some of the emotional and psychological needs. However, they are limited in the ability to do so by monetary and support constraints. There needs to be vast improvements in the service provisions by statutory agencies in collaboration with existing voluntary services to address the mental health needs of this population whilst taking into account the wide variety of cultural and linguistic differences.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

BMA- British Medical Association

BME- Black and Minority Ethnic

CSIP- Care services improvement partnership

DH- Department of Health

DRE- Delivering Race Equality

DSM-IV- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

GAD- Generalised anxiety disorder

GP- General Practitioner

HADS- Hospital anxiety and depression scale

ICD-10- International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems  
10<sup>th</sup> Revision

IES-R- Impact of event scale-revised

MDE- Major depressive episodes

MINI- Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interviews

NAM- New Asylum Model

NASS- National Asylum Support Service

NHS- National Health Service

PAFRAS- Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

PCT- Primary Care Trust

PDS- Post-traumatic Diagnostic Scale

PTSD- Post traumatic stress disorder

RCO- Refugee Community Organisations

U.K.- United Kingdom

UNHCR- United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

WHO- World Health Organisation

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Table one: Entitlements for Asylum seekers

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