Access to healthcare for people facing multiple health vulnerabilities

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ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE FOR PEOPLE FACING MULTIPLE HEALTH VULNERABILITIES

OBSTACLES IN ACCESS TO CARE FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN IN EUROPE

Doroftei, aged 10, has not been vaccinated: "I still cannot go to school"
Saint-Denis - France

18TH MAY 2015
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Europe is the cradle of human rights. Indeed, the range of international texts and State commitments that ensure people’s basic and universal rights is impressive. With regard to healthcare, European Union institutions recently reaffirmed their adherence to the values of universality, access to good quality care, equity and solidarity. Yet, this report shows how, in practice, these promises too often remain just words rather than effective progress.

Doctors of the World – Médecins du monde (MdM) teams are distinctive because they work both on international programmes and at home. Abroad, MdM is active in many of the places in the world from which people try and escape to survive. At home, we provide freely accessible frontline medical and social services to anyone who faces barriers to the mainstream healthcare system. This report is based on data collected in 2014 in face-to-face medical and social consultations with 23,040 people in 25 programmes/cities in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Turkey. It paints a bleak picture of the ‘cradle of human rights’.

Increasingly dangerous migration routes due to tightening border controls, sub-standard detention conditions and a life in fear of being expelled await most of the migrants who decide to seek safety and refuge in Europe. They have in common with destitute EU citizens the risk of becoming victims of exploitation, but they also face xenophobia. While the economic crisis and austerity measures have resulted in an overall increase in unmet health needs in most countries, the most destitute – including an increasing number of nationals – have been hit the hardest. In total, 6.4% of the patients seen in Europe were nationals (up to 30.7% in Greece and 16.5% in Germany), 15.6% were migrant EU citizens (up to 53.3% in Germany) and 78% of all patients seen were from outside the EU/3rd-country nationals. Altogether, 62.9% of the people seen by MdM in Europe had no healthcare coverage. Children’s right to healthcare is one of the most basic, universal and essential human rights. And yet less than half of the children seen in MdM consultations were properly immunised against tetanus (42.5%) or measles, mumps and rubella (34.5%) – although these vaccinations are known to be essential throughout the world and the vaccination coverage for measles at the age of two years is around 90% in the general population in Europe. More than half of the pregnant women had not had access to antenatal care before they came to MdM (54.2%).

The reported barriers to healthcare, as well as the analysis of the legal frameworks in the countries surveyed, confirm that restrictive laws and complex administrative processes to obtain access to care actually contribute to making people sicker. As in previous surveys, the barriers to accessing healthcare most often cited were financial inability to pay, administrative problems, lack of knowledge or understanding of the healthcare system and rights to care, and language barriers. It is thus hardly surprising that one patient in five said s/he had given up trying to access care or treatment in the last 12 months.

The data collected clearly deconstruct the myth of migration for health reasons, so often used by governments to restrict access to care. The migrants encountered in 2014 had been living in the ‘host country’ for 6.5 years on average before consulting MdM. Only 3% quoted health as one of the reasons for migration. Among the migrants who suffered from chronic diseases, only 9.5% knew they were ill before arriving in Europe.

European and national migration policies focus heavily on migration as a ‘security issue’, thereby forgetting their duty to protect. An overwhelming majority of patients (84.4%) questioned on their experience of violence reported that they had suffered at least one violent experience, whether in their country of origin, during the journey or in the host country. They need extra care and safe surroundings to rebuild their lives, instead of too often living in ditches and slums in fear of expulsion.

EU Member States and institutions must offer universal public health systems built on solidarity, equality and equity (and not on profit rationale), open to everyone living in the EU. MdM urges Member States and EU Institutions to ensure immediately that all children residing in the EU have full access to national immunisation programmes and to paediatric care. Similarly, all pregnant women must have access to termination of pregnancy, antenatal and postnatal care and safe delivery. In order to respect the ban on the death penalty, seriously ill migrants should never be expelled to a country where effective access to adequate healthcare cannot be guaranteed. They must be protected in Europe and have access to the care they need.

As health professionals, we will continue to give appropriate medical care to all people regardless of their administrative or social status and the existing legal barriers. MdM refuses all restrictive legal measures to alter medical ethics and exerts all health professionals to provide care to all patients.

The most often cited barriers to accessing healthcare were financial problems in paying for care (27.9%), administrative problems (21.9%) and lack of knowledge or understanding of the healthcare system and of their rights (14.1%).

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTHCARE

2014 IN FIGURES

23,040 patients seen in face-to-face medical and social consultations in 25 cities in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Turkey, of whom 22,171 patients were seen in the nine European countries

- 6,856 were women
- 42,534 social and medical consultations, of which
- 41,238 in the nine European countries
- 23,240 diagnoses in the nine European countries

OF THE 310 PREGNANT WOMEN SEEN IN EUROPE:

- 54.2% had no access to antenatal care
- 58.2% came to receive care too late – after the 12th week of pregnancy (among those who had not accessed antenatal care prior to consulting MdM)
- 81.9% had no health coverage
- 89.2% lived below the poverty line
- 52.4% did not have the right to reside
- 55.3% were living in temporary accommodation and
- 8.1% were homeless
- 30.3% reported poor levels of moral support
- 47.5% were living apart from one or more of their minor children
- In Istanbul, 98% of the pregnant women seen had no healthcare coverage

OF THE 623 CHILDREN SEEN IN EUROPE:

- Only 42.5% had been vaccinated against tetanus (69.7% in Greece)
- Only 34.5% had been vaccinated against mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) (57.6% in Greece)
- 38.8% of patients did not know where to go to get their children vaccinated

OF ALL THE PEOPLE SEEN IN THE NINE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:

- 43.9% were women
- The median age was 35.8
- 93.6% were foreign citizens:
  - 15.6% were migrant EU citizens and 78% citizens of non-EU countries
  - 6.4% of the patients seen were nationals (up to 30.7% in Greece and 16.5% in Germany)
- Foreign citizens had been living in the surveyed country for 6.5 years on average before consulting MdM
- 91.3% were living below the poverty line
- 64.7% of patients were living in unstable or temporary accommodation and 9.7% were homeless
- 29.5% declared their accommodation to be harmful to their health or that of their children
- 18.4% never had someone they could rely on and were thus completely isolated
- 50.2% had migrated for economic reasons, 28.2% for political reasons and 22.4% for family reasons; only 3% had migrated for health reasons
- 34% had the right to reside in Europe
- 43% were or had been involved in an asylum application

84.4% of the patients who were questioned on the issue reported that they had suffered at least one violent experience:

- 52.1% had lived in a country at war
- 39.3% reported violence by the police or armed forces
- 37.6% of women reported sexual assault and 24.1% had been raped
- 10% reported violence in the host country

HEALTH STATUS

- 22.9% of patients perceived their physical health as bad or very bad. When it comes to mental health, this goes up to 27.1%
- 70.2% hadn’t received medical attention before going to MdM among patients who suffered from one or more chronic condition(s)
- Only 9.5% of migrants who suffered from chronic diseases knew about them before coming to Europe
- 57.9% had at least one health problem needing treatment that had never been treated before their consultation at MdM.

OF THE PEOPLE SEEN IN NINE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:

- 62.9% of the people seen in Europe had no healthcare coverage
- The most often cited barriers to accessing healthcare were financial problems in paying for care (27.9%), administrative problems (21.9%) and lack of knowledge or understanding of the healthcare system and of their rights (14.1%)
- 54.8% needed an interpreter.
- During the previous 12 months:
  - 20.4% had given up seeking medical care or treatment
  - 15.2% had been denied care on at least one occasion
  - 4.5% had experienced racism in a healthcare setting
- 52% of patients without permission to reside said they restricted their movement or activity for fear of arrest.

28” non-EU countries nationals refer to anyone who is not a citizen of one of the 28 European Union
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Europe is the cradle of human rights. Indeed, the range of international texts and State commitments that ensure people’s basic and universal rights is impressive. With regard to healthcare, European Union institutions recently reaffirmed their adherence to the values of universality, access to good quality care, equity and solidarity. Yet, this report shows how, in practice, these promises too often remain just words rather than effective progress.

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Increased migration risks due to tightening border controls, sub-standard detention conditions and a life in fear of being expelled await most of the migrants who decide to seek safety and refuge in Europe. They have in common with destitute Europeans the risk of becoming victims of exploitation, but they also face xenophobia. While the economic crisis and austerity measures have resulted in an overall increase in unmet health needs in most countries, the most destitute – including an increasing number of nationals – have been the hardest hit. In total, 6.4% of the patients seen in Europe were nationals (up to 30.7% in Greece and 16.5% in Germany). 15.6% were migrant EU citizens (up to 53.3% in Germany) and 78% of all patients seen were from outside the EU/third-country nationals.

Together, 62.9% of the people seen by MdM in Europe had no healthcare coverage. Children’s right to healthcare is one of the most basic, universal and essential human rights. And yet less than half of the children seen in MdM consultations were properly immunised against tetanus (62.5%) or measles, mumps and rubella (34.5%) – although these vaccinations are known to be essential throughout the world and the vaccination coverage for measles at the age of two years is around 90% in the general population in Europe. More than half of the pregnant women had not had antenatal care before they came to MdM (54.2%). Of those, the majority came to receive care too late - that is after the 12th week of pregnancy (58.2%). A large majority of pregnant women had no healthcare coverage (81.1%), were living below the poverty line and 30.3% reported poor levels of moral support.

The reported barriers to healthcare, as well as the analysis of the legal frameworks in the countries surveyed, confirm that restrictive laws and complex administrative processes to obtain access to care actually contribute to making people sicker. As in previous surveys, the barriers to accessing healthcare most often cited were financial inability to pay, administrative problems, lack of knowledge or understanding of the healthcare system and rights to care, and language barriers. It is thus hardly surprising that one patient in five said s/he had given up trying to access care or treatment in the last 12 months.

The data collected clearly deconstruct the myth of migration for health reasons, so often used by governments to restrict access to care. The migrants encountered in 2014 had been living in the ‘host country’ for 6.5 years on average before consulting MdM.

Only 3% quoted health as one of the reasons for migration. Among the migrants who suffered from chronic diseases, only 9.5% knew they were ill before arriving in Europe. European and national migration policies focus heavily on migration as a ‘security issue’, thereby forgetting their duty to protect. An overwhelming majority of patients (84.4%) questioned on their experience of violence reported that they had suffered at least one violent experience, whether in their country of origin, during the journey or in the host country. They need extra care and safe surroundings to rebuild their lives, instead of too often living in ditches and slums in fear of expulsion.

EU Member States and institutions must offer universal public health systems built on solidarity, equality and equity (and not on profit rationale), open to everyone living in the EU. MdM urges EU Member States and EU Institutions to ensure immediately that all children residing in the EU have full access to national immunisation programmes and to paediatric care. Similarly, all pregnant women must have access to termination of pregnancy, antenatal and postnatal care and safe delivery. In order to respect the ban on the death penalty, seriously ill migrants should never be expelled to a country where effective access to adequate healthcare cannot be guaranteed. They must be protected in Europe and have access to the care they need.

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2014 IN FIGURES

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- 8,656 were women
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OF THE 310 PREGNANT WOMEN SEEN IN EUROPE:
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- 38.8% of patients did not know where to go to get their children vaccinated

OF ALL THE PEOPLE SEEN IN THE NINE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:
- 63% were men
- The median age was 35.8
- 93.6% were foreign citizens:
  • 15.6% were migrant EU citizens and 78% citizens of non-EU countries
  • 6.4% of the patients seen were nationals (up to 30.7% in Greece and 16.5% in Germany)
- Foreign citizens had been living in the surveyed country for 6.5 years on average before consulting MdM
- 91.3% were living below the poverty line
- 64.7% of patients were living in unstable or temporary accommodation and 9.7% were homeless

- 29.5% declared their accommodation to be harmful to their health or that of their children
- 18.4% never had someone they could rely on and were thus completely isolated
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BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTHCARE

- 62.9% of the people seen in Europe had no healthcare coverage
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  • 20.4% had given up seeking medical care or treatment
  • 15.2% had been denied care on at least one occasion
  • 4.5% had experienced racism in a healthcare setting
  • 52% of patients without permission to reside said they restricted their movement or activity for fear of arrest
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FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD VACCINATION

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LIVING CONDITIONS

HOUSING CONDITIONS

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SOCIAL ISOLATION

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

COVERAGE OF HEALTHCARE CHARGES

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GIVING UP SEEKING HEALTHCARE

DENIAL OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

RACISM IN HEALTHCARE SERVICES

FEAR OF BEING ARRESTED

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SELF-PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS

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HEALTH PROBLEMS BY ORGAN SYSTEM

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The context in 2014

The continuing effects of the economic crisis

Health expenditure fell in half of the European Union countries between 2009 and 2012, and significantly slowed in the rest of Europe. The public share of total spending on health globally declined between 2007 and 2012. At the same time, the overall population’s unmet needs for medical examination are on the rise in most European countries and have nearly doubled since the beginning of the crisis in Greece and Spain.

The crisis has led the World Health Organization (WHO) to (re)confirm that “health systems generally need more, not fewer, resources in an economic crisis”. In the same document, WHO notes that measuring the impact that the economic crisis has had on healthcare systems remains difficult, because of time lags in the availability of international data and in the effects of both the crisis and policy responses to counter these negative effects. It also continues to be difficult because the adverse effects on population groups already facing vulnerability factors can remain unseen in public health information systems or surveys.

In recent decades, a number of Member States have introduced or increased out-of-pocket payments for health with the objective of making patients ‘more responsible’ – thereby reducing the demand for healthcare and direct public health costs. Yet, co-payment has been proven to be administratively complex. In addition, it does not automatically decrease the overall utilisation of healthcare services, and does not necessarily incite users to make more rational use of healthcare. Furthermore, it has been shown that destitute people or people with greater health needs (such as the chronically ill) are more affected by co-payment schemes. Consequently, WHO warns that user fees should be used with great caution in view of their detrimental effects on vulnerable populations.

The researchers at the WHO European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies noted that many of the countries at risk of inadequate levels of public funding following the crisis are actually EU countries, further adding that “the important economic and social benefits of public spending on health have not been sufficiently acknowledged in fiscal policy decisions and EU-IMF Economic Adjustment Programmes”.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recently warned that the gap between rich and poor is at its highest level in most OECD countries in 30 years. “Not only cash transfers but also increasing access to public services, such as high-quality education, training and healthcare, constitute long-term social investment to create greater equality of opportunities in the long run.”

GREECE: THE SITUATION REMAINS PARTICULARLY WORRYING

Although the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 is still being felt across healthcare systems throughout Europe, some countries have been hit more severely than others. In Greece, 2.5 million people live below the poverty line (23% of the total population). More than 210% of the total population live in overcrowded households, 29.4% state that they are unable to keep their home adequately warm, and 57.9% of the destitute population report that they are being confronted with payment areas for electricity, water, gas, etc. Crisis and austerity policies have left almost a third of the population without healthcare coverage. Unemployment stood at 28.8% in December 2014; unemployment benefits were limited to 12 months, after which there was no minimum income guarantee. The percentage of people reporting unmet medical care needs has increased since the beginning of the crisis, rising from around 5.4% of the population in 2008 to 9% in 2013.

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE 2014 SURVEY**

**THE CONTEXT IN 2014**

**THE CONTINUING EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS**

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**Greece: The situation remains particularly worrying**

Although the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 is still being felt across healthcare systems throughout Europe, some countries have been hit more severely than others. In Greece, 2.5 million people live below the poverty line (23% of the total population). Moreover, 27.3% of the total population live in overcrowded households, 29.4% state that they are unable to keep their home adequately warm, and 57.9% of the destitute population report that they are being confronted with payment arrears for electricity, water, gas, etc. -- Crisis and austerity policies have left almost a third of the population without healthcare coverage. Unemployment stood at 28.9% in December 2014; unemployment benefits were limited to 12 months-, after which there was no minimum income guarantee. -- The percentage of people reporting unmet medical care needs has increased since the beginning of the crisis, rising from around 5.4% of the population in 2008 to 9% in 2013.

The researchers at the WHO European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies noted that many of the countries at risk of inadequate levels of public funding following the crisis are actually EU countries, further adding that: “The importance economic and social benefits of public spending on health have not been sufficiently acknowledged in fiscal policy decisions and EU-IMF Economic Adjustment Programmes”.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recently warned that the gap between rich and poor is at its highest level in most OECD countries in 30 years: “Not only cash transfers but also increasing access to public services, such as high-quality education, training and healthcare, constitute long-term social investment to create greater equality of opportunities in the long run.”

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The crisis in Greece also had impacts on the number of drug users, the rates of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) among them, and the type of drugs used: For example, the affordable drug also (methamphetamine mixed with other dangerous substances) is having devastating effects among drug users. A recent study estimated the Greek prevalence for HCV at 1.87%, while almost 80% of chronic HCV patients may not be aware of their infection, and only 58% of diagnosed chronic HCV patients had ever been treated.

THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON CHILDREN

An estimated 27 million children in Europe are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with the economic and social crisis further increasing their vulnerability. The national data collected by UNICEF clearly show the harmful impact of the crisis. Some 1.6 million more children were living in severe material deprivation in 2012 than in 2008 (an increase from 9.5 million to 11.1 million) in 30 European countries. The number of children entering into poverty during the crisis is 2.6 million higher than the number of those who have been able to escape poverty since 2008. Child poverty rates are soaring in Greece (40.5% in 2012 compared with 23% in 2008) and Spain (36.3% in 2012 compared with 26.2% in 2008).

The latest available OECD data indicate a rise in the number of low-birth-weight babies by more than 16% between 2008 and 2011, which has long-term implications for child health and development. Obstetricians have reported a 32% rise in stillbirths in Greece between 2008 and 2010, while fewer pregnant women have access to antenatal care.

MIGRANTS IN DANGER AT EUROPE’S BORDERS

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the number of internal armed conflicts and other forms of violent situations leading to mass displacement within or across borders, e.g. in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, South Sudan and Syria, to name but a few. Besides the direct impact of violence, many other factors endanger the populations in these countries, such as increasing poverty, food insecurity and hunger, as well as increasing risks of public health problems.

Although countries in North Africa, the Middle East and East Africa have been hosting the majority of the millions of displaced persons, there has also been a gradual increase in the number of asylum applications in the 28 Member States of the EU from 626,820 in 2014 – an increase of more than 40% compared to 2013 according to UNHCR. The fact that asylum seekers cannot freely choose where to lodge an asylum application (because the Dublin II regulation requires to request asylum in the EU country where asylum seekers arrived first) has serious consequences for their well-being and mental health. It also shows the clear lack of solidarity between Member States when it comes to migration issues.

The effects of the increase in the number of asylum seekers in Europe were directly observed by Migrant teams in Switzerland, where two additional asylum seeker centres were opened in 2014 in Munich the number of asylum seekers has almost doubled compared to 2013, temporarily leading to a situation where asylum seekers had to sleep in tents or outside, before new reception facilities were opened.

Since the start of the Syrian crisis, of the total estimated 11.4 million Syrians who have fled their homes (over half of the total Syrian population), 3.8 million took refuge in neighbouring countries and 7.6 million were internally displaced. Syrians were the largest group of asylum seekers, with the majority of asylum seekers have sought asylum in the EU since the war began - less than 4% of the conflict’s total refugee population – and the majority of Syrians were resettled in two countries, Germany and Sweden.

Due to controls and walls on land migration routes, many migrants try to reach Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. In December 2014, the UNHCR estimated their total annual number at 200,000 (compared to 65,000 in 2013). Among those seeking a better future in Europe are large numbers of unaccompanied minors. In Italy and Malta alone, over 23,800 children had arrived by sea, including at least 12,000 unaccompanied, during the first nine months of 2014. While 150,000 migrants were rescued under the Mare Nostrum operation, UNHCR estimates that around 3,400 people have died or have gone missing at sea (data as of November 2014).

In February 2015, Nils Mutilbre, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, denounced the fact that “despite advances in legislation on discrimination and hate speech not only persist in France but are on the rise... [in recent years], there has been a huge increase in anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and homophobic acts. In the first half of 2014 alone, the number of anti-Semitic acts virtually doubled... The rising number of anti-Muslim acts, 40% of which are carried out against women, and homophobic acts, which occur since two every day, is also cause for great concern.”

These differences are most salient in Greece and Spain (respectively 26% and 24% unemployment among native-born compared with 3.8% and 3.6% among foreign-born workers).

During last year’s European Parliamentary elections, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and the International Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Europe) registered 42 hate speech incidents against migrants, LGBTI, Muslims and Roma by election candidates, five of whom currently sit in the newly elected Parliament.

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The crisis in Greece also had impacts on the number of drug users, the rates of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) among them, and the type of drugs used. For example, the affordable drug ‘methamphetamine mixed with other dangerous substances’ is having devastating effects among drug users. A recent study estimated the Greek prevalence for HCV at 1.87%, while almost 80% of chronic HCV patients may not be aware of their infection, and only 58% of diagnosed chronic HCV patients had ever been treated.

**THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON CHILDREN**

An estimated 27 million children in Europe are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with the economic and social crisis further increasing their vulnerability. The national data collected by UNICEF clearly show the harmful impact of the crisis. Some 1.6 million more children were living in severe material deprivation in 2012 than in 2008 (an increase from 9.5 million to 11.1 million) in 30 European countries. The number of children entering into poverty during the crisis is 2.6 million higher than the number of those who were able to escape poverty since 2008. Child poverty rates are soaring in Greece (4.0% in 2012 compared with 2.3% in 2008) and Spain (36.3% in 2012 compared with 26.2% in 2008).

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The effects of the increase in the number of asylum seekers in Europe were directly observed by MSF teams in Switzerland, where two additional asylum seeker centres were opened in 2014 in Munich. The number of asylum seekers has almost doubled compared to 2013, temporarily leading to a situation whereby asylum seekers had to sleep in tents outside, before new reception facilities were opened.

Since the start of the Syrian crisis, the total estimated 11.4 million Syrians who have fled their homes (over half of the total Syrian population - and the majority of Syrians were women and children) have crossed borders, e.g. in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, South Sudan and Syria, to name a few. Besides the direct impact of violence, many other factors endanger the populations in these countries, such as increasing poverty, food insecurity and hunger, as well as increasing risks of public health problems.

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the number of internal armed conflicts and other forms of violent situations leading to mass displacement within or across borders, e.g. in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, South Sudan and Syria, to name a few. Besides the direct impact of violence, many other factors endanger the populations in these countries, such as increasing poverty, food insecurity and hunger, as well as increasing risks of public health problems.

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Instead of focusing on the needs of vulnerable refugees, the European Council launched a joint police and border guard operation MoSoMaT that took place over two weeks in October 2014. Although this joint operation was focused on apprehending ‘irregular’ migrants and their facilitators, a quarter of the people encountered by the authorities were Syrian asylum seekers.

Although migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits, and clearly make positive fiscal contributions, they are often falsely described as ‘benefit-oriented’. Furthermore, the crisis has first and foremost hit foreign-born workers: despite identical participation rates in the labour force across OECD countries, the average unemployment rate among foreign-born workers (13%) is significantly higher than that of native-born workers (9%).

These differences are most salient in Greece and Spain (respectively 26% and 24% unemployment among native-born compared with 38% and 36% among foreign-born workers).

**RISING INTESTIONALITY**

Migrants In danger at europa’s Borders

In the first half of 2014 alone, the number of anti-Semitic hate speech incidents in France has almost doubled compared to 2013. In Germany, the number of anti-Muslim hate speech incidents is even higher, having almost tripled in 2013. These differences are most salient in Greece and Spain (respectively 26% and 24% unemployment among native-born compared with 38% and 36% among foreign-born workers).

During last year’s European Parliamentary elections, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Europe) registered 42 hate speech incidents against migrants, LGBTI, Muslims and Roma by election candidates, five of whom currently sit in the newly elected Parliament.

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Due to controls and wars on land migration routes, many migrants try to reach Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. In December 2014, the UNHCR estimated their total annual number at 200,000 (compared to 65,000 in 2013). Among those seeking a better future in Europe are large numbers of unaccompanied minors. In Italy and Malta alone, over 23,800 children had arrived by sea, including at least 12,000 unaccompanied, during the first nine months of 2014. While 150,000 migrants were rescued under the Mare Nostrum operation, UNHCR estimates that around 3,400 people have died or have gone missing at sea (data as of November 2014).
RECENT LEGAL CHANGES, FOR BETTER OR WORSE

2014 saw a number of positive and negative legislative changes that have influenced access to healthcare as summarised below:

BELGIUM: The Law of 19 January 2012 confirmed the practice of most public health insurance funds in Belgium (1) to provide healthcare for asylum seekers during the first three months of their stay ([1]). Consequently, destitute EU citizens have to prove that they have been living in Belgium for longer than three months, before obtaining the same access to the healthcare scheme as for undocumented migrants. However, on 30 June 2014, the Constitutional Court of Belgium ruled that this measure created a difference of treatment that is discriminatory to destitute EU citizens and their family members, as destitute undocumented migrants from 2013 can benefit from the Urgent Medical Aid (Aide Médicale Urgente – AMU) scheme upon arrival. Thus, with this judgment, EU citizens in Belgium should have access to AMU during the first three months of their stay in Belgium. However, this has not yet been applied in practice by many CRAS.

FRANCE: Following the French President’s political commitments, from 1 July 2013 onwards, the thresholds for the complementary Universal Medical Coverage (Couvercle Maladie Universelle complémentaire – CMU) and the complementary healthcare coverage assistance have been raised by €75. By May 2014 (as of the published figures), 339,307 additional people were covered thanks to this positive measure (not including people covered by the specific healthcare coverage for students, State Medical Aid (Aide Médicale de l’état – AME), the threshold of which is the same as for the CMU). This measure should enable more than 750,000 additional people to have full health coverage. The full extent of this measure is expected by the end of 2015.

GERMANY: In March 2015, the German Federal government modified the law on asylum seekers: the length of time during which their access to healthcare is restricted to ‘acute medical patients’ was reduced from 48 to 15 months.

GREECE: According to the Common Ministerial Decree of 5 June 2014, access to healthcare for individuals without healthcare coverage under the legal residence status is granted under certain conditions. People entitled to free medical care in hospitals include: uninsured Greek people; EU citizens or people from outside the EU who live permanently and legally in Greece, have no medical coverage through a public or private insurance scheme and do not fulfill the requirements in order to issue a health booklet; and people who previously had health insurance but lost it due to debts to their insurance funds. A three-member committee in all public hospitals is responsible for reviewing all requests, on a case-by-case basis, and granting access to free medical care. This process obviously results in long waiting times. New reforms are expected in the course of 2015.

THE NETHERLANDS: Since 2012, there has been a drastic increase in the amount a patient has to pay prior to being reimbursed for healthcare costs – from €220 to at least €375 a year in 2015 (up to €4875 depending on the formula and insurance provider the individual has chosen). This has resulted in the difficulties for an increasing number of patients. However, this payment of a contribution does not apply (nor does it apply to their dental care), GP visits, antenatal care or for integrated care schemes for chronic diseases e.g. diabetes.

SWEDEN: Since July 2013, a law has granted undocumented migrants (_forenom_ and the so-called ‘new illegal’ immigrants) a same access to healthcare as asylum seekers i.e. subsidised healthcare ‘that cannot be deferred’, including medical examination and medicine covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Act, dental care ‘that cannot be deferred’, maternity care and abortion, and sexual and reproductive care. All children (6-18) with undocumented parents have the same rights to medical and dental care as Swedish children. In February 2014, the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) came to the conclusion that the terms ‘that cannot be deferred’ and ‘due to medical reasons’ are not necessarily ethical principles to the medical profession, are not medically applicable in health and medical care and should be changed with ‘providing necessary patient safety’. Indeed, it makes it very difficult for an individual to know whether s/he will be accepted for healthcare. Furthermore, there is a lack of legal clarity on whether destitute EU citizens who have lost the right to reside are currently able to access healthcare on the same basis as undocumented migrants from outside the EU. The law merely stipulates that this is possible ‘only in a few cases’, without further precision. However, in December 2014, the Socialstyrelsen publicly announced that EU citizens should be considered as undocumented (and have the same access to care as asylum seekers and third-countrynational citizens). In practice, undocumented EU citizens still have to pay full fees for receiving healthcare in most hospitals.

UNITED KINGDOM: In May 2014, the government passed the new Immigration Act, setting out its intention to make it ‘more difficult for illegal’ immigrants to live in the UK. According to the government, the Act is intended to: • Introduce changes to the removals and appeals systems, making it easier and quicker to remove those with no right to be in the UK. • End the rights to private healthcare Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – the right to respect for family life – guarantees. • Prevent ‘illegal’ immigrants accessing and abusing public services or the labour market. Migrants seeking leave to enter the country for more than six months will have to pay an immigration healthcare charge. The charge has been increased from €200 for other migrants, to €410 for international students and €280 for other categories of migrants. The surcharge will be paid as part of the individual’s visa fee, before their arrival in the UK, and would secure the same access to primary and secondary National Health Service (NHS) services during their stay as someone coming to the UK for more than three months. The definition of ‘ordinary residences’ will be changed so that all those who do not have permission to reside will be charged. The ordinary residence requirement (giving full access to the NHS) was already restricted in 2004 (from anyone living in the UK for over one year to only those with a permit to stay). From 2015 onwards, this new restriction to cover only people with indefinite leave to remain will exclude those who have not been resident in the UK for more than five years and have not made a successful application for indefinite leave to remain.

The Department of Health has set out its intention to extend charging to some primary care and accident and emergency services but no decision has been made on it or when this will be implemented. GP consultations should remain free.

AN OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AND EU BODIES’ COMMITMENT TO HEALTH PROTECTION

There is an impressive range of international texts and commitment that ensure people’s basic and universal right to health. This covers the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Council of Europe (the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter) and the European Union (the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaty on the Function of the European Union and the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights). As well as many resolutions, conclusions and opinions in the reports of Parliamentary and agency, there are the most recent and relevant expressions of commitment to health protection since MDM’s previous European report in May 2014.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In its country conclusions on Spain concerning health, social security and social protection, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECR) condemns the exclusion of undocumented migrants from healthcare in Spain. In its country conclusions on Greece (2), the Committee questions whether the right to healthcare for pregnant women, adolescents and the uninsured is sufficiently guaranteed. Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mahnikes, reminded national governments that universal access to healthcare should not be undermined by austerity measures or the economic crisis. Following his visit to France, he denounced the serious and chronic inadequacies in the reception of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, as well as the use of bone age tests to determine their age, a practice in country conclusions on Spain, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) noted that, ‘there is no legal instrument, or even consensus, with regard to precautions in the case of minors’. The Assembly stressed the need to apply the benefit of the doubt, bearing in mind the higher interest of the child.

EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS

The European Parliament (EP) acknowledged that, ‘access to the most basic healthcare services, such as emergency care, is severely limited for third-country nationals and for regularised but not yet integrated migrants’. The EP resolution on health protection in a world of mobility for people from third countries in 2014 and the EP resolution on the Criminalisation of migrants in an irregular situation and of persons engaging with them were to underline the fact that undocumented migrants ‘fear of detection deprives them of healthcare’. Finally, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) published an extensive report on Access to healthcare in times of crisis, which included a focus on the situation of specific groups in vulnerable situations, such as Roma, undocumented migrants, older people with chronic health conditions or disabilities and people with mental health problems.

41 Information from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2014

42 The EP resolution on unaccompanied minors in the EU (2012/2586(INI))

43 www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/conclusions/State/SpainXX2_en.pdf

44 www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/conclusions/State/SpainXX2_en.pdf

45 Europarlamentaire rapporteur voor een ‘Purpose’ report on the Criminalisation of irregular migrants


47 Situation of access to healthcare services in Greece and Cuts in public services but no decision has been made on it or when this will be implemented. GP consultations should remain free.

48 ‘Please note that MDM and its partners, especially the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) and the Public Health Working Group, have been a leader in the field of the ‘new’ Asylum seeker’s health’.

49 www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/conclusions/State/SpainXX2_en.pdf

50 EP resolution on Employment and social aspects of the role and operations of the Troika 2010/2012

51 www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/conclusions/State/SpainXX2_en.pdf

52 www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/conclusions/State/SpainXX2_en.pdf

53 Council conclusions on the economic crises and healthcare, Luxembourg, 20 June 2014


55 The FRA also published a report on fundamental rights at airports and another one on European standards in asylum procedures, completing earlier work on migrants’ rights in Europe’s southern border areas.

BELGIUM: The law of 19 January 2012 38 applied in practice by many CPAS.

Greece: According to the Common Ministerial Decree of 5 June 2014, access to healthcare for individuals without healthcare coverage but the legal residence status is granted under certain conditions. People entitled to free medical care in hospitals: uninsured Greek people; EU citizens or people from outside the EU who live permanently and legally in Greece, have no medical coverage through a public or private insurance scheme and do not fulfil the requirements in order to issue a health booklet: and people who previously had health insurance but lost it due to debts to their insurance funds. A three-member committee in all public hospitals is responsible for reviewing all requests, on a case-by-case basis, and granting access to free medical care. This process obviously results in long waiting times. New reforms are expected in the course of 2015.

FRANCE: Following the French President’s political commitments, from 1 July 2013 onwards, the thresholds for the complementary Universal Medical Coverage (Couverture Maladie Universelle complémentaire – CMUc) will be increased. Certain conditions have to be met for this coverage to be applicable, including having paid the necessary contributions (e.g. for uninsured migrants). However, this has not yet been applied in practice by many CPAS.

Greece: The law of 19 January 2012 modifying the legislation relating to the Receit d’Assurance Maladie (RAM) no longer applies in Greece. The law on Asylum seekers: the length of time during which their access to healthcare is restricted to “acute individual and serious pathologies” was reduced from 14 to 15 months.

GREECE: According to the Common Ministerial Decree of 5 June 2014, access to healthcare for individuals without healthcare coverage but the legal residence status is granted under certain conditions. People entitled to free medical care in hospitals: uninsured Greek people; EU citizens or people from outside the EU who live permanently and legally in Greece, have no medical coverage through a public or private insurance scheme and do not fulfil the requirements in order to issue a health booklet: and people who previously had health insurance but lost it due to debts to their insurance funds. A three-member committee in all public hospitals is responsible for reviewing all requests, on a case-by-case basis, and granting access to free medical care. This process obviously results in long waiting times. New reforms are expected in the course of 2015.

UNited Kingdom: since 2014, the government passed the new immigration Act, setting out its intention to make it “more difficult for ‘illegal’ migrants to live in the UK”. According to the government, the Act is intended to: • Introduce changes to the removals and appeals system, making it easier and quicker to remove those with no right to be in the UK. • End the position set out in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – the right to respect for private and family life. • Prevent ‘illegal’ migrants accessing and abusing public services or the labor market schemes for citizens who have already spent 10 years in the country for more than six months will have to pay an immigration health charge.

Sweden: Since July 2013, a law has granted undocumented migrants the same access to healthcare as asylum seekers i.e. subsidiised healthcare “that cannot be deferred”, including medical examination and medicine covered by the Pharmaceutical Funds. All other categories of medical care “that cannot be deferred”, maternity care and abortion, and sexual and reproductive care for undocumented parents have the same rights to medical and dental care as Swedish children. In February 2014, the law was amended to ensure that undocumented children will be granted the right to be reimbursed for healthcare costs, among other things.

There is an impregnable wall of international texts and commit- 
ments that ensure people’s basic and universal right to health. This covers the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), the Council of Europe (the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter) and the European Union (the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaty on the Function of the European Union and the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights), as well as many resolutions, conclusions and recommendations published by the Parliamentary Assembly and agencies of the Council of Europe on fundamental freedoms in the area of health, including the European Social Charter and the European Convention on Human Rights. Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, reminded national governments that universal access to healthcare should not be undermined by austerity measures or the economic crisis. And following his visit to France, he denounced the serious and chronic inadequacies in the reception of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, as well as the use of bone age tests to determine their age. Concerning the situation of migrant children, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) noted that, “there is no legal instrument; even consilium, with regard to protection of the legal situation of children’s age”. The Assembly stressed the need to apply the benefit of the doubt, bearing in mind the higher interest of the child among other things.

EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS

The European Parliament (EP) acknowledged that “access to the most basic healthcare services, such as emergency care, is severely limited among the estimated 14 million undocumented migrants in the EU.” The EP has also called for the urgent adoption of a proposal on the right to healthcare for all EU citizens, including those without legal status, in order to guarantee access to healthcare as a fundamental right. The EP resolution on Employment and social aspects of the role and operations of the Troika and on migrants in the European Union (2013/2115(INI)) has called on the Troika to accelerate the rollout of healthcare and to “pay particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as undocumented migrants.”

The European Union has set out its intention to extend charging to some primary care and accident and emergency services but no decision has been made on this if and when this will be implemented. GP consultations should remain free.

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http://www.eupha-migranthealthconference.com/?page_id=1766

Council conclusions on the economic crisis and healthcare, Luxembourg, 20 June 2014.


53 Council conclusions on the economic crisis and healthcare, Luxembourg, 20 June 2014.


56 EP resolution on undocumented workers in the EU (2013/2115(INI)).

57 http://www.europe.europa.eu/commissioner/index_en.htm


THE MDM INTERNATIONAL NETWORK’S DOMESTIC PROGRAMMES

Since 1980, the international aid organisation Doctors of the World – Médecins du monde (MdM) has been working for a world where trau-
matic wealth have been overcome and where the right to health is recog-
nised and effective – both at home and abroad. The work of MdM mainly relies upon the commitment of volunteers. Working in a daily basis with people facing numerous vulnerability factors, MdM believes in social justice as a vehicle for equal access to healthcare, respect for fundamental rights and collective solidarity.

MdM international network currently comprises 15 autonomous or-
ganisations in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Swit-
zerland, the UK and the USA.58 More than half of the MdM International Network’s programmes are domestic, including 150 across the Euro-
pean continent, 12 in the USA, Canada and Argentina and three in Ja-
pan. 80% of the domestic programmes are run by mobile, outreach

teams.

MdM’s main mission is to provide access to healthcare through freely accessible frontline social and medical services for people who face barriers to the mainstream healthcare system. At home, MdM works mainly with people confronted with multiple vulnerabilities affecting their access to healthcare including homeless people, drug users, destitute nationals as well as European citizens, sex workers, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and Roma communities.

MdM programmes are aimed at empowerment through the active partici-
pation of user groups, as a way of identifying health-related solutions and of combating the stigmatisation and exclusion of these groups. MdM supports the creation of self-help groups, as a way of streng-
thening civil society and recognising experience-based expertise. MdM activities can thus lead to social change: amending laws and recognising experience-based expertise. MdM activities can thus lead to social change: amending laws and recognising experience-based expertise.

THE OBSERVATORY’S OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

In spite of the growing awareness and literature on health inequalities, the populations encountered through local programmes (especially undocumented migrants) often fall through population-wide official surveys and are currently not captured by the official health informa-
tion systems – and thus are often referred to as ‘invisible’.

In the light of this observation, in 2004 MdM International Network initiated the Observatory on access to healthcare, documenting the social determinants of health and patient health status with the fol-
lowing objectives:

- Continuously improve the quality of services provided to MDM pa-

   tients (through the use of the questionnaires to guide the social
   and medical consultations).

- Establish the evidence basis necessary to raise awareness among
   healthcare providers and authorities on how to effectively inte-
   grate people facing vulnerabilities into the mainstream healthcare
   system.

- Support the field teams in monitoring their programmes.

The Observatory has developed a quantitative and qualitative infor-
mation system that includes systematic patient data collection and

annual statistical analyses, narrative patient testimonies, de jure and
de facto analysis of healthcare systems, as well as identification of best practices when it comes to working with people facing multiple vulnerability factors.

This way the Observatory develops a sound knowledge of the popu-
lations encountered in MdM’s programmes that complements popula-
tion-wide official statistics with concrete experience provided direct-
ly by people confronted with multiple vulnerability factors and by the health professionals working with them.

Rather than talking about vulnerable groups, the International Network

Observatory proposes to use the concept of vulnerability in health. Defining vulnerable groups in a static manner ignores the subjective,

interconnected and contextual dimensions of vulnerabilities. For inst-
ance, some population groups are being made vulnerable due to res-

trictive laws. Furthermore, everyone is likely to be vulnerable at some point in her or his life. Vulnerability factors can be accumulated and have combined effects. On the other hand, although health is largely shaped by social determinants, many members of vulnerable groups are actually quite resilient.

Since 2006, the five reports produced by the Observatory have seen a gradual expansion in the geographical coverage of the data col-
lection, as well as in the focus – from undocumented migrants to all patients who attended MdM health centres throughout the MdM Inter-
national Network. All the survey reports and public reports aimed at health professionals and stakeholders that have been produced by the MdM International Network Observatory on Access to Healthcare are available at: www.mdmeuroblog.wordpress.com.

PROGRAMMES SURVEYED

These programmes consist of fixed clinics that offer freely accessible front-
l ine primary healthcare consultations as well as social support and informa-
tion about the healthcare system and patient rights with regard to accessing

healthcare. Ultimately, these programmes aim to help patients reintegrate

into the mainstream healthcare system, where it is legally possible. MDM

programmes are run by volunteers and employees consisting of pro-

fessionals – nurses, medical doctors, midwives, dentists, specialists etc. – as well as social workers, support workers, psychologists and administrators etc.

To meet the various needs of patients and to take into account the charac-
teristics of each country’s context, different packages of services and types of inter-

ventions have been developed over the years, as summarised below:

DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS ADAPTED TO SUIT THE POPULATIONS ENCOUNTERED BY MDM

To best meet the multiple needs of populations encounte-

red, different types of interventions exist across the MdM in-

ternational network. These strategies may include housing,

education, training, medication, care for mental health issues, chronic conditions and sexual and reproductive health, specialist consultations and referrals to other health care providers (e.g. laboratories, hospital care, obstetric and pediatric care).

Examples of interventions: free social and medical consul-
tations, harm reduction programmes with syringes, condoms and outreach medical consultations in slums, squats, on the streets etc.

To find more about MDM and its programmes, visit its website at www.mdmeuroblog.wordpress.com.

58 Prior to the creation of the MdM International Network Observatory on access to healthcare, MDM France implemented in 2006 a common data collection tool in order to monitor the main social determinants of health; the tool was accessed healthcare and the health status of its service users and published the results. This led to the creation in 2000 of the Observatory of Access to Healthcare in France.

59 Throughout this document, countries are cited in alphabetic order by their official international code, according to European recommendations (Interinstitutional Style Guide, EU, Rev 14 / 1.3.2012).

OPENING OF MDM LUXEMBOURG AND FIRST INFORMATION ON BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE

For ten months in 2014, MDM Luxembourg provided medical consultations to destitute, homeless or undocumented people in a day shelter in the city of Luxembourg. The same questionnaires as for the 25 other programmes were administered to 59 patients in order to provide a picture of the population encountered. The overall results are more significant if we add the number of patients who were aware that the healthcare providers were Luxembourg nationals, followed by Romanian and Italian citizens. More than a quarter of patients encountered in 2014 were homeless. In Luxembourg the main barriers to social welfare in general and to healthcare in particular consist of administrative and financial difficulties. Even when encountered through self-help groups, people were required to pay moderate user fees. Access to healthcare coverage depends upon having work and a residential address. Undocumented migrants have no healthcare cover-

age and only have access to emergency services. More and more hospitals require a deposit from people who don’t present a healthcare card to the patient. To avoid hospital fees and to allow the client access to a medical treatment, they end up paying a moderate user fee. In Luxembourg, the main barriers to social welfare in general and to healthcare in particular consist of administrative and financial difficulties.

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THE MDM INTERNATIONAL NETWORK’S DOMESTIC PROGRAMMES

Since 1980, the international aid organisation Doctors of the World – Médecins du monde (MDM) has been working for a world where trau- matised people can live free from fear and violence, in dignity and peace, with access to health and nutrition services. To this end, MDM campaigns and works on projects that are designed and implemented in collaboration with local actors, seeking to enhance the health of the poor and vulnerable groups while reinforcing equity and solidarity.

MDM’s programmes in 2014

Among the entire network, MDM programmes surveyed are domestic, including 150 across the Euro- pean continent, 12 in the USA, Canada and Argentina and three in Japan. 80% of the domestic programmes are run by mobile, outreach teams.

MDM’s main mission is to provide access to healthcare through freely accessible frontline social and medical services for people who face barriers to the mainstream healthcare system. At home, MDM works mainly with people confronted with multiple vulnerabilities affecting their access to healthcare including homeless people, drug users, destitute nationals as well as European citizens, sex workers, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and Roma communities.

MDM programmes are aimed at empowering the active partici- pation of user groups, as a way of identifying health-related solutions and of combating the stigmatisation and exclusion of these groups. MDM supports the creation of user support groups as a way of stren- ghening civil society and recognising experience-based expertise. MDM activities can thus lead to social change: amending laws and practices as well as reinforcing equity and solidarity.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS ADAPTED TO SUIT THE POPULATIONS ENCOUNTERED BY MDM

To best meet the multiple needs of populations encount- ered, different types of interventions exist across the whole MDM in- ternational network. MDM programmes sometimes include nursing care, care for mental health issues, chronic conditions and psychological consultations. For all people without healthcare coverage including undocumented migrants and refugees, the five reports produced by the Observatory have seen the OBservat Ory’s OB jectIves ->

The Observatory has developed a quantitative and qualitative infor- mation system that includes systematic patient data collection and annual statistical analyses, narrative patient testimonies, de jure and de facto analyses of healthcare systems, as well as identification of best practices when it comes to working with people facing multiple vulnerabilities.

This way the Observatory develops a sound knowledge of the popu- lations encountered in MDM’s programmes that complements popula- tion-wide official statistics with concrete experience provided direct- ly by people confronted with multiple vulnerability factors and by the health professionals working with them.

Rather than talking about vulnerable groups, the International Network Observatory proposes to use the concept of vulnerability in health. Defining vulnerable groups in a static manner ignores the subjective, interactive and contextual dimensions of vulnerabilities. For inst- ance, some population groups are being made vulnerable due to restric- tive laws. Furthermore, everyone is likely to be vulnerable at some point in his or her lifetime. Vulnerability factors can be accumulated and have combined effects. On the other hand, although health is largely shaped by social determinants, many members of vulnerable groups are actually quite resilient.

Since 2006, the five reports produced by the Observatory have seen an annual expansion in the geographic coverage of the data col- lection, as well as in the focus – from undocumented migrants to all patients who attended MDM health centres throughout the MDM inter- national Network. All the survey reports and public reports aimed at health professionals and stakeholders that have been produced by the MDM International Network Observatory on Access to Healthcare are available at: www.mdmeuroblog.wordpress.com

THE OBSERVATORY’S OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

In spite of the growing awareness and literature on health inequalities, the populations encountered through MDM programmes (especially undocumented migrants) often fall through population-wide official surveys and are currently not captured by the official health informa- tion systems – and thus are often referred to as ‘invisible’.

In the light of this observation, in 2004 MDM International Network initiated the Observatory on access to healthcare, documenting the social determinants of health and patient health status with the fol- lowing objectives:

» Continuously improve the quality of services provided to MDM pa- tients (through the use of the questionnaires to guide the social and medical consultations).

» Establish the evidence basis necessary to raise awareness among healthcare providers and authorities on how to effectively inte- grate people facing vulnerabilities into the mainstream healthcare system.

» Support the field teams in monitoring their programmes.

The Observatory has developed a quantitative and qualitative infor- mation system that includes systematic patient data collection and annual statistical analyses, narrative patient testimonies, de jure and de facto analyses of healthcare systems, as well as identification of best practices when it comes to working with people facing multiple vulnerabilities.

More than half of the MDM International Network programmes surveyed in 2014 in addition to social and medical services, provision of psychological support.

CH SWITZERLAND

» La Chaux de Fonds

» Canton of Neuchâtel

Nurse-led consultations in asylum seeker centres (in the canton of Neuchâtel) and nurse consul- tation and social advice in the city of La Chaux de Fonds - mainly aimed at migrants.

DE GERMANY

» Munich

In addition to social and medical services, provision of paediatric, gynaecological, psychiatric and psychological consultations. For all people without healthcare coverage including undocu- mented migrants.

EL GREECE

» Athens

» Patras

» Chania

» Piraeus

» Mytilini

» Thessaloniki

In addition to social and medical services, provision of psychological support and specialist consultations. Furthermore, MDM have provided education on the topic of health care for refugees in all the centres.

ES SPAIN

» Tenerife

» Bilbao

» Zaragoza

» Seville

» Valencia

» Málaga

» Alicante

In addition to social and medical services, the Spanish programmes offer awareness-raising and health promotion campaigns, training, intercultural mediation between professionals and programme users and awareness-raising of professionals working in public facilities.

FR FRANCE

» Saint-Denis

» Paris

Tailed social and medical facilities to respond to the needs of groups who cannot access health care. Specialised consultations including psychiatry. Referral to mainstream healthcare system.

NL NETHERLANDS

» Amsterdam

» The Hague

Provision of social advice and support to undocumented migrants from outside the EU for their integration into the regular health system. Additionally, over the counter medication (but not me- dical consultations), empowerment of migrant groups and awareness-raising of health profession- als in the city of Amsterdam.

SE SWEDEN

» Stockholm

Provision of healthcare and patient referral to the public health system after informing them about their rights. EU citizens constitute the main group of patients but migrants from outside the EU are also attended. Psycho-social support and legal consultations regarding asylum are also provided as well as follow-up patient referrals.

TR TURKEY

» Istanbul

The Turkish-West African organisation ASME (the Association for solidarity and support for mi- grants) in partnership with MDM, runs a social and medical clinic for asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants in Istanbul. Patients are also given information on their rights, al- though they have very few legal avenues for treatment that is free or at a little cost. ASME has developed a strong link with West African communities.

UK UNITED KINGDOM

» London

The clinic in East London provides primary healthcare to excluded groups, especially migrants and sex workers. A large part of the work involves helping patients to register with a general practi- tioner, the entry point to the healthcare system. Additionally, social consultations are provided in a migrant centre in central London, and with an organisation supporting sex workers.

OPENING OF MDM LUXEMBOURG AND FIRST INFORMATION ON BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE

For ten months in 2014, MDM Luxembourg provided medical consultations to destitute, homeless or undocumented people in a day shelter in the city of Luxembourg. The same questionnaires as for the 25 other programmes were administered to 59 patients in order to provide a picture of the population encountered. The overall majority of patients (94%) were men. The majority of the patients were Luxembourg nationals, followed by Romanian and Italian citizens. More than a quarter of patients encountered in 2014 were homeless. In Luxembourg the main barriers to social welfare in general and to healthcare in particular consist of administrative and financial difficulties.

Even when encountered through their existing service networks, the five reports produced by the Observatory have seen the OBservat Ory’s OB jectIves 58

58 Prior to the creation of the MDM International Network Observatory on Access to Healthcare, MDM France implemented in 2006 a common class collection tool in order to monitor the main social determinants of health, the factors that affect accessibility and the health status of its services users and publish the results. This led to the creation in 2005 of the Observatory of Access to Healthcare in France.

To meet the various needs of patients and fit the characteristics of each country’s context, different packages of services and types of inter- ventions have been developed over the years, as summarised below:

PROGRAMMES SURVEYED

These programmes consist of fixed clinics that offer freely accessible front- line primary healthcare consultations as well as social support and informa- tion about the healthcare system and patient rights with regard to accessing healthcare. Ultimately, these programmes aim to help patients reintegrate into the mainstream healthcare system, where it is legally possible. MDM programmes are run by volunteers and employees consisting of health profes- sionals – nurses, medical doctors, midwives, dentists, specialists etc. – as well as social workers, support workers, psychologists and administrators etc. To meet the various needs of patients and fit the characteristics of each country’s context, different packages of services and types of inter- ventions have been developed over the years, as summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>COUNTRY CODE</th>
<th>SITES PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE BELGIUM</td>
<td>Antwerp</td>
<td>Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH SWITZERLAND</td>
<td>La Chaux de Fonds</td>
<td>Canton of Neuchâtel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE GERMANY</td>
<td>Munich</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL GREECE</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>Patras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES SPAIN</td>
<td>Tenerife</td>
<td>Bilbao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR FRANCE</td>
<td>Saint-Denis</td>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL NETHERLANDS</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>The Hague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE SWEDEN</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR TURKEY</td>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK UNITED KINGDOM</td>
<td>London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 Throughout this document, countries are listed alphabetically either by their official international code, according to European recommendations (International Single Code, EU Rev Ju / 11/2002).

"In addition to social and medical services, provision of psychological support."
METHODS

QUESTIONNAIRES AND METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION

The data analysed in this report was collected by means of questionnaires administered to patients who visited one of the 25 programmes in the 10 countries associated with the International Network Observatoire in 2014. Every patient who attended a consultation with a health professional and support worker was administered at least one of the three standardised, multilingual forms - social questionnaire, medical questionnaire and medical re-consultation questionnaire(s).

STATISTICS

This report contains data in three different types of proportion: 1) the Chi-square test or Fisher’s exact test when the figures were low. It should be noted that a p < 0.05 denotes a statistically significant difference.

NUMBERS SURVEYED

This report is based on the analyses of data from 23,040 individuals (15,648 with details) of whom 8,656 were women. In total 42,534 consultations were analysed (including 29,898 for which the whole questionnaire was administered in the nine European countries and 1,296 in Turkey).

NUMBER OF PATIENTS AND CONSULTATIONS BY COUNTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>NO. OF PATIENTS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>NO. OF VISITS</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15,648</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>1,398</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12,067</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>5,384</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12,913</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>8,139</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15,648</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>1,253</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12,067</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23,040</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15,648</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP OF THE SITES SURVEYED IN 2004

FOCUS ON PREGNANT WOMEN

A total of 371 pregnant women were seen for consultations in 2014 (mainly in Belgium, Germany, France and Turkey) representing 2.4% of patients. The average age of the pregnant women was 27.8 in the European countries (29.1 in Istanbul) and the youngest was 14 years old.

Almost all the pregnant women seen (97.0%) were foreign nationals from sub-Saharan Africa (37.1%), the EU (20.2%), Asia (13.9%) and European countries outside the EU (9.9%). In Istanbul, almost all the pregnant women (96.7%) were from sub-Saharan Africa.

Reasons for Consulting MDM Programmes

The vast majority of patients consulted MDM programmes to obtain medical care (91% in Europe and 99.4% in Istanbul). On the other hand, consulting MDM for an administrative, legal or social issue is also common: one third of patients seen in Europe came for one of these reasons (alone, or more often, together with a health problem).

Administrative Status of the Pregnant Women Interviewed

In Europe, 52.4% of the pregnant women seen had no right to reside: 2.4% were EU nationals and 50.0% nationals of non-EU countries.

In Istanbul, 29.4% were EU nationals and 23.2% non-EU nationals.

Of the pregnant women surveyed in Europe, 33.3% were in the process of claiming asylum (29.4% in Istanbul). 44.1% were or had at some point been involved in an asylum claim (33.3% in Istanbul) and, of these, 37.5% had been refused asylum.

As a result of being undocumented, two thirds of the pregnant women (66.7%) in the nine European countries restricted their movements to varying degrees for fear of arrest. This creates a significant additional obstacle to accessing antenatal care. In Istanbul 79.7% were in this situation.

Of the pregnant women seen in Europe. 55.3% were living in temporary accommodation (24.6% in Istanbul). In total 62.9% of pregnant women seen in Europe and 55.0% in Istanbul considered their accommodation to be unstable. In Europe 22.9% and in Istanbul 54.2% considered that their housing conditions were harmful to their health or that of their children. The vast majority (89.2%) were living below the poverty line.

62 Within one country, if a programme in one city sees ten times fewer patients than another programme in another city, the former will count for one tenth of the latter.

63 The number of people living on the financial resources of the respondent was not asked. If they were included the percentage of people living below the poverty line would be much higher and they actually represent all the patients seen by MdM.
FOCUS ON PREGNANT WOMEN

A total of 371 pregnant women were seen for consultations in 2014 (mainly in Belgium, Germany, France and Turkey) representing 2.4% of patients. The average age of the pregnant women was 27.8 in the European countries (29.1 in Istanbul) and the youngest was 14 years old. Almost all the pregnant women seen (97.0%) were foreign nationals from sub-Saharan Africa (37.1%), the EU (20.2%), Asia (13.9%) and European countries outside the EU (9.3%). In Istanbul, almost all the pregnant women (96.7%) were from sub-Saharan Africa.

MAP OF THE SITES SURVEYED IN 2004

MAP OF THE SITES SURVEYED IN 2004

STATISTICS

This report contains data in three different types of proportion: 1) the proportions by country are all crude proportions and include all the survey sites (irrespective of the number of cities or programmes); 2) the European total proportions were calculated for the nine European countries and are, for most of them and unless otherwise indicated, weighted average proportions (WAP) of all the countries; this allows actual differences between countries to be corrected so they each have the same weight in the overall total; 3) crude average proportions (CAP) - where countries contribute proportionally to their numbers - are also given systematically in the tables and figures. When numbers of respondents were low, or when subgroups of populations were examined, CAP was preferably provided.

BIRTHS IN 2014 OF PREGNANT WOMEN SURVEYED 2014

Administrative Status of the Pregnant Women Interviewed

FOCUS ON PREGNANT WOMEN

Methods

Questionnaires and Method of Administration

The data analysed in this report was collected by means of questionnaires administered to patients who visited one of the 25 programmes in the 10 countries associated with the International Network Observatory in 2014. Every patient who attended a consultation with a health professional and support worker was administered at least one of the three standardised, multilingual forms - social questionnaire, medical questionnaire and medical – re-consultation questionnaire(s).

Reasons for consulting MDM programmes

The vast majority of patients consulted MDM programmes to obtain medical care (91.1% in Europe and 99.4% in Istanbul). On the other hand, consulting MDM for an administrative, legal or social issue is also common: one third of patients seen in Europe came for one of these reasons (alone, or more often, together with a health problem).

In Europe, 52.4% of the pregnant women seen had no right to reside: 2.4% were EU nationals and 50.0% nationals of non-EU countries.

Administrative Status of the Pregnant Women Interviewed

Citizen of non-EU Country without Permission to Reside

EU Citizen with No Permission to Reside

Total Without Permission to Reside

No Residence Permit Requirement (Nationality)

Asylum Seeker (Application or Appeal Ongoing)

Valid Residence Permit

EU National Staying for Less than Three Months (No Residence Permit Required)

Visas of All Types

Specific Situation Concerning Right to Remain

Total with Permission to Reside

Total

Missing Data

Of the pregnant women surveyed in Europe, 33.3% were in the process of claiming asylum (29.4% in Istanbul). 44.4% were or had at some point been involved in an asylum claim (33.3% in Istanbul) and, of these, 37.5% had been refused asylum.

As a result of being undocumented, two thirds of the pregnant women (66%) in the nine European countries restricted their movements to varying degrees for fear of arrest. This creates a significant additional obstacle to accessing antenatal care. In Istanbul 79.7% were in this situation.

Of the pregnant women seen in Europe, 55.3% were living in temporary accommodation (24.6% in Istanbul). In total, 62.9% of pregnant women seen in Europe and 55.0% in Istanbul considered their accommodation to be unstable. In Europe 22.9% and in Istanbul 54.2% reported that their accommodation was unfavorable to their health or that of their children. The vast majority (89.2%) were living below the poverty line.

11 The number of people living on the financial resources of the respondent was not asked if they were included the percentage of people living below the poverty line would be much higher and they actually represent all the patients seen by MDM.

12 Within one country, if a programme in one city sees ten times fewer patients than another programme in another city, the former will count 10 times less of the latter.

13 The Chi-square test or Fisher’s exact test when the figures were low.

14 Including subsidiary/humanitarian protection.
A total of 49.3% of the pregnant women reported having one or more minor children. Nearly half of them (47.5%) were living apart from their children due to migration report considerable emotional strain, including anxiety, loss, and guilt, and they are at greater risk of depression. In Istanbul, up to 74.1% were living without any of their children. Women who are separated from their children due to migration report considerable emotional strain, including anxiety, loss, and guilt, and they are at greater risk of depression.

Of those surveyed, 30.3% of pregnant women declared they never or rarely had someone they could rely on in case of need. The figure was even worse in Istanbul where 72.8% pregnant women were in this situation. These figures show how strong the social isolation was for these women, at a time when they were in great need of moral support. It constitutes one more barrier to accessing healthcare.

Regardless of their administrative status, 81.1% of pregnant women seen by MDM in Europe had no healthcare coverage. A total lack of healthcare coverage on the day of their first consultation was specifically recorded for pregnant women in Belgium (95.2%), France (100.0%), London (94.9%) and Istanbul (98.1%). In addition, in Germany 75.3% only had access to emergency care. Among the pregnant women in the nine European countries, 54.2% had not had access to antenatal care when they came to MDM’s free health centres and, of those, 58.2% received care too late – that is after the 12th week of pregnancy.

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According to the scientific literature, antenatal care is a right for pregnant women. Therefore interventions proved effective in the scientific literature should be provided universally, free of charge.” (WHO)

Antenatal care also known as prenatal care is the set of interventions that a pregnant woman receives from organized health care services. Antenatal care is essential to prevent or identify and treat conditions that may threaten the health of the fetus/newborn and/or the mother; to help a woman approach pregnancy and birth as positive experiences and provide a good start for the newborn child. The care for each pregnant woman needs to be individualized based on her own needs and wishes.

Without access to timely – i.e. after 12 weeks of pregnancy – and regular antenatal care throughout the pregnancy, a number of risks can affect mothers and children:

- Mother to child transmission of HIV (and Hepatitis B)
- Sexually transmitted infections go unnoticed, that can cause abortion, premature ruptures of membranes, pre-term delivery
- No early detection of anemia and diabetes (also leading to increased morbidity and mortality for both mother and child)
- Pre-eclampsia goes unnoticed during the second and third trimester
- No preparation before the delivery leads to increased stress and risks during birth and during first months as well as no future family planning, no explanation about breast feeding, vaccination etc.

Source: WHO Europe/MDM. What is the efficacy/effectiveness of antenatal care and the financial and organizational implications?

### HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% IN EUROPE (N=393)</th>
<th>% IN ISTANBUL (N=61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO COVERAGE / ALL CHARGES MUST BE PAID</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS TO EMERGENCY SERVICES ONLY</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FULL HEALTHCARE COVERAGE</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN RIGHTS IN ANOTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRY</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS TO GP WITH FEES</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTIAL HEALTHCARE COVERAGE</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREE ACCESS TO GENERAL MEDICINE</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RISKS THAT MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FACE WITHOUT ACCESS TO TIMELY ANTENATAL CARE

- Mother to child transmission of HIV (and Hepatitis B)
- Sexually transmitted infections go unnoticed, that can cause abortion, premature ruptures of membranes, pre-term delivery
- No early detection of anemia and diabetes (also leading to increased morbidity and mortality for both mother and child)
- Pre-eclampsia goes unnoticed during the second and third trimester
- No preparation before the delivery leads to increased stress and risks during birth and during first months as well as no future family planning, no explanation about breast feeding, vaccination etc.

### Jane

Jane is from Nigeria and came to the UK four years prior to her pregnancy. She presented to the clinic at 23 weeks gestation. She had become temporarily registered with her GP and was referred to her local hospital for antenatal care but was too scared to go, as she was afraid of being found by the UKBA (Home Office).

She was referred to the Accident and Emergency services by the MDM clinician who assessed her, due to concerns about her health. She was admitted to a nearby hospital and then discharged after a few days but sadly went into premature labour and lost her baby girl in the early neonatal period. She received a bill for €3,620.

MDM UK - London - 2014

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67. Response rate = 78.5% and 57.4% respectively.
A total of 49.3% of the pregnant women reported having one or more minor children. Nearly half of them (45.9%) were living apart from one or more of their minor children. In Istanbul, up to 74% were living without any of their children. Women who are separated from their children due to migration report considerable emotional strain, including anxiety, loss and guilt, and they are at greater risk of depression. Of those surveyed, 30.3% of pregnant women declared they never or rarely had someone they could rely on in case of need. The figure was even worse in Istanbul where 72.8% pregnant women were in this situation. These figures show how strong the social isolation was for these women, at a time when they were in great need of moral support. It constitutes one more barrier to accessing healthcare.

Regardless of their administrative status, 81.1% of pregnant women seen by MD&M in Europe had no healthcare coverage. A total lack of healthcare coverage on the day of their first consultation was specifically recorded for pregnant women in Belgium (95.2%), France (100.0%), London (94.9%) and Istanbul (98.1%). In addition, in Germany 75.3% only had access to emergency care.

Among the pregnant women in the nine European countries, 54.2% had not had access to antenatal care when they came to MD&M’s free health centres and, of those, 58.2% received care too late—that is after the 12th week of pregnancy.

** Risks that mothers and children face without access to timely antenatal care **

- Sexually transmitted infections go unnoticed, that can cause abortion, premature ruptures of membranes, pre-term delivery
- No early detection of anemia and diabetes (also leading to increased morbidity and mortality for both mother and child)
- Pre-eclampsia goes unnoticed during the second and third trimester
- No preparation before the delivery leads to increased stress and risks during birth and during first months as well as no future family planning, no explanation about breast feeding, vaccination etc.

Source: WHO Europe/MD&M: What is the efficacy/effectiveness of antenatal care and the financial and organizational implications?

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*** Three generations of Somali asylum seekers wishing to know what their future could be: Switzerland - 2014 ***

Jane is from Nigeria and came to the UK four years prior to her pregnancy. She presented to the clinic at 23 weeks gestation. She had become temporarily registered with her GP and was referred to her local hospital for antenatal care but was too scared to go, as she was worried about being found by the UKBA (Home Office).

She was referred to the Accident and Emergency services by the MD&M clinician who assessed her, due to concerns about her health. She was admitted to a nearby hospital and then discharged after a few days but sadly went into premature labour and lost her baby girl in the early neonatal period. She received a bill for £3,620.

MD&M UK - London - 2014

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A LEGAL OVERVIEW OF ACCESS TO CARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN.

BELGIUM: Undocumented pregnant women have full, free access to antenatal and postnatal care if they have obtained the AMU (which can be a long and difficult process and the AMU can also be refused based on very variable and opaque criteria, depending on where the patient lives). However, access to (preventive and psychosocial) antenatal and postnatal care consultations should be free of charge for everyone. Termination of pregnancy is covered by the AMU, but the procedure is too long to fall within the 12-week limit, in which case women must pay out-of-pocket (at least €250).

FRANCE: Undocumented pregnant women can gain access to AME but there are many barriers to obtaining it, thus it can be difficult to gain access to antenatal and postnatal care. Nevertheless, a specific provision states that all care for pregnant women must be considered as urgent (antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care), as well as termination of pregnancy. This applies only in hospitals and is free of charge.

GERMANY: Only undocumented pregnant women with a temporary tolerance to reside (Duldung) can access antenatal and postnatal care. This status is granted only for a limited time period when women are considered ‘unfit for travel’ – generally three months before and three months after delivery. Women are not covered for the first six months of the pregnancy. With regard to migrant EU citizens, an increasing number of pregnant women do not have any access to antenatal and postnatal care.

Women whose income is below €1,033 per month can have their termination of pregnancy reimbursed by their health insurance. Theoretically, asylum seekers and undocumented women are also entitled to reimbursement. However, access remains very difficult for undocumented women, due to the need for a health insurance voucher from the social welfare office and because of the risk of being reported when requesting it. Civil servants, such as health personnel (with the exception of medical emergency wards) have a duty to report undocumented migrants.

GREECE: The new Migration Code implemented by law in 2014 continues to prohibit Greek public services (article 26), local authorities, and organizations of social security to offer services to foreigners who are “unable to prove that they have entered and are residing in the country legally”. So undocumented pregnant women have no health coverage. However, undocumented pregnant women have now access to free delivery but not to ante- and postnatal care. New changes might occur in 2015.

With regard to termination of pregnancy, they have to pay approximately €330 in public hospitals. Article 79(1) of the same law establishes that undocumented pregnant women may not be expelled from the country during their pregnancy or for six months after giving birth. Undocumented migrants who cannot be expelled for medical reasons may benefit from a temporary residence permit.

NETHERLANDS: Pregnant women who are seeking asylum have access to healthcare free at the point of delivery, under a specific scheme fee asylum seekers (including antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care). Undocumented migrants cannot get healthcare coverage.

Undocumented pregnant women have access to antenatal, delivery and postnatal care but they are expected to pay themselves, unless it is proven that they cannot pay in the case of pregnancy and childbirth, the authorities reimburse contracted hospitals and pharmacies 100% of the unpaid bills. However, in practice, undocumented pregnant women are often urged to pay straight away, in cash or it is suggested that they sign to pay by instalments, or receive a bill and reminders at home. and are pursued by debt collectors contracted by healthcare providers. In contrast to maternity care, contraception and termination of pregnancy must be fully paid for by undocumented women.

SWITZERLAND: Undocumented pregnant women who are seeking asylum have access to free healthcare for the first pregnancy and childbirth, the authorities reimburse contracted hospitals and pharmacies 100% of the unpaid bills. However, in practice, undocumented pregnant women are often urged to pay straight away, in cash or it is suggested that they sign to pay by instalments, or receive a bill and reminders at home. and are pursued by debt collectors contracted by healthcare providers. In contrast to maternity care, contraception and termination of pregnancy must be fully paid for by undocumented women.

At the end of 2013 the Spanish government proposed to repeal the 2002 law on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary interruption of pregnancy, thereby making the right of girls and women to decide themselves if and when they want a child. The draft law would only allow termination of pregnancy in the case of rape or if the pregnancy posed a serious physical or mental health risk to women (to be attested by two different doctors not working at abortion facilities).

The proposal required girls and women pregnant as a result of rape to report the crime to the police before they could access a legal abortion. This would have introduced serious barriers for all women who are victims of rape, but especially for undocumented women (fear of and actual risk of being expelled if they contact the authorities).

In reaction to the draft law, women (and men) from a wide range of political parties and social backgrounds, and from all over Europe, took to the streets in great numbers in order to demonstrate against the proposal and to show international solidarity with women in Spain.

Mobilisation for women’s right to decide for themselves if and when they have a child

At the same time, the MdM International Network ran a campaign for the right of women to decide if and when they want to have children, for access to contraception for all women and legal abortion. The campaign was called Names not numbers” in reference to the 50,000 women who die every year as a result of unsafe abortion, i.e. without medical supervision.

Under this pressure, the Spanish draft law was eventually withdrawn.

At the UN Special Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health in September 2014, UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon emphasised in his opening speech the risks associated with illegal abortion: “We must confront the fact that some 800 women still die each day from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth. An estimated 8.7 million young women in developing countries resort to unsafe abortions every year. They urgently need our protection.”
A LEGAL OVERVIEW OF ACCESS TO CARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN.

BELGIUM: Undocumented pregnant women have full, free access to antenatal and delivery care if they have obtained the AMU (which can be a long and difficult process and the AMU can also be refused based on very variable and opaque criteria, depending on where the patient lives). However, access to (preventive and psychosocial) antenatal and postnatal care consultations should be free of charge for everyone.

Termination of pregnancy requires an AMU, but the procedure is too long to fall within the 12-week limit. In which case women must pay out-of-pocket (at least €250).

FRANCE: Undocumented pregnant women can gain access to AMU but there are many barriers to obtaining it, thus it can be difficult to gain access to antenatal and postnatal care. Nevertheless, a specific provision states that all care for pregnant women must be considered as urgent (antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care), as well as termination of pregnancy. This applies only in hospitals and is free of charge.

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Women whose income is below €1,033 per month can have their termination of pregnancy reimbursed by their health insurance. Theoretically, asylum seekers and undocumented women are also entitled to reimbursement. However, access remains very difficult for undocumented women, due to the need for a health insurance voucher from the social welfare office and because of the risk of being reported when requesting it. Civil servants, such as health personnel (with the exception of medical emergency wards) have a duty to report undocumented migrants.

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With regard to termination of pregnancy, they have to pay approximately €340 in public hospitals. Article 79(1) of the same law establishes that undocumented pregnant women may not be expelled from the country during their pregnancy or for six months after giving birth. Undocumented migrants who cannot be expelled for medical reasons may benefit from a temporary residence permit.

NETHERLANDS: Pregnant women who are seeking asylum have access to healthcare free at the point of delivery under a specific scheme for asylum seekers (including antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care). Undocumented migrants cannot get healthcare coverage.

Undocumented pregnant women have access to antenatal, delivery and postnatal care but they are expected to pay themselves, unless it is proven that they cannot pay. They have to pay a fee of around €350 for every visit to a doctor. They are often reported to the police by healthcare staff, either because they are undocumented or because they cannot pay the doctor’s fees.

SWITZERLAND: Undocumented pregnant women can afford the cheapest health insurance (around €300 per month) are fully covered for termination of pregnancy, antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care: no franchise and no out-of-pocket payment are required. Pregnant women without healthcare coverage have to pay themselves. In case of emergency, practitioners must provide healthcare without asking if patients have healthcare coverage, but patients have to pay the bill or have to leave without giving any contact address.

TURKEY: Undocumented pregnant women have to pay their health expenses for antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care. They are often reported to the police by healthcare staff, either because they are undocumented or because they cannot pay the doctor’s fees.

UK: Maternity care for pregnant undocumented women – including antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care – is not free at the point of use, but considered as secondary care. Thus, women are usually billed for the full course of care through pregnancy, delivery and postnatal care: around €7000 without complications.

Regarding termination of pregnancy, while it is considered as primary care by law and thus should be free of charge, it is in practice regarded as secondary care in some parts of the country and undocumented pregnant women have to pay for this service.

At the end of 2013 the Spanish government proposed to repeal the 2002 law on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary interruption of pregnancy, thereby robbing the right of girls and women to decide themselves if and when they want a child.

The draft law would only allow termination of pregnancy in the case of rape or if the pregnancy posed a serious physical or mental health risk to women (to be attested by two different doctors not working at abortion facilities).

The proposal required girls and women pregnant as a result of rape to report the crime to the police before they could access a legal abortion. This would have introduced serious barriers for all women who are victims of rape, but especially for undocumented women (fear of and actual risk of being expelled if they contact the authorities).

In reaction to the draft law, women (and men) from a wide range of political parties and social backgrounds, and from all over Europe, took to the streets in great numbers in order to demonstrate against the proposal and to show international solidarity with women in Spain.
FOCUS ON CHILDREN VACCINATION

The vaccine(s) that protect against tetanus, MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), diphtheria and whooping cough are considered essential throughout the world, and most WHO Europe countries have also included the vaccine against Hepatitis B in their national immunisation schedules. Many vaccines not only protect the individual but also the community, through the mechanism of ‘herd immunity’. Vaccinating an individual will also help keep others around them safer in order for this mechanism to work, and to achieve the eradication of these preventable diseases, a sufficiently large part of the population needs to be protected by means of vaccination. Coverage needs to be above 95% to eradicate measles, above 85% for diphtheria and between 92% and 94% for whooping cough.

Vaccination for groups facing multiple vulnerabilities is even more important than for the general population, as they have fewer opportunities to be vaccinated because of multiple barriers to healthcare (mainly legal and financial). Furthermore, social determinants (e.g. lack of access to adequate food, housing, water and sanitation) have an impact on their likelihood of becoming ill and the risks of developing more serious diseases. Vaccination may help to reduce these risks, since it often lessens the severity or complications of a disease even in the few cases where vaccination does not succeed in preventing it.

A total of 645 minor patients were seen by MDM programmes in 2014. They represent 4.1% of the total population. No minors were seen in Sweden.

In Europe, only 42.5% of minors who responded had been vaccinated against tetanus. In France, only 29.3% of minors had definitely been vaccinated. In Istanbul, this applied to 52.4%.

The rates of vaccination against hepatitis B (HBV) were even lower: the average proportion of vaccinated minors in Europe was 38.7%.

The HBV vaccination rate was very low in France (22.1%). In the European countries, following the WHO recommendation to incorporate hepatitis B vaccine as an integral part of national infant immunisation programmes, the immunisation coverage in the general population is averaging 83%.

The rates for mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) and pertussis/whooping cough vaccinations were 34.5% and 39.8% respectively. Yet, in the majority of countries participating in the survey, vaccination coverage for pertussis and measles at the age of two years has reached (and often exceeded) 90% in the general population.

These figures highlight the shocking gap between the general population and the children seen in MDM clinics in terms of access to vaccination. In fact, over half of the children (57.6%) seen by MDM teams had not been vaccinated against tetanus and about 60% to 65% were not protected from whooping cough or MMR.


11. Herd immunity applies to measles, rubella, varicella (chickenpox), polio and whooping cough. For infections for which humans do not form a reservoir (e.g. tetanus, rabies), vaccines only offer individual protection.

12. This rate of children seen in MDM clinics for whom vaccination status was not documented is much too high. All children’s vaccination status should be checked, even if they may subsequently be referred to specific vaccination centres.


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A total of 645 minor patients were seen by MdM programmes in 2014. They represent 4% of the total population. No minors were seen in Sweden.

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In total, 38.8% of the people asked about vaccination did not know where to go to have their children vaccinated in the five European countries where the question was asked. In Istanbul, almost nobody knew where to go to have their child vaccinated.

The rates of vaccination against hepatitis B (HBV) were even lower: the average proportion of vaccinated minors in Europe was 38.7%. The HBV vaccination rate was very low in France (22.1%). In the European countries, following the WHO recommendation to incorporate hepatitis B vaccine as an integral part of national infant immunisation programmes, the immunisation coverage in the general population is averaging 93%.

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In total, 38.8% of the people asked about vaccination did not know where to go to have their children vaccinated in the five European countries where the question was asked. In Istanbul, almost nobody knew where to go to have their child vaccinated.
Indeed, the municipality has recently introduced new legislation limiting undocumented migrant registration. Although her first child was registered and Mariela had a permit to reside, the new local regulation has made the registration with the Municipality of her second child more difficult. This, in turn, impedes obtaining a health card from the health centre.

As vaccination and health cards are requested for registration at state schools, not accessing healthcare can result in being excluded from school as well. Mariela, from Paraguay, has a permit to reside as well as a work permit in Spain, where she lives with her two children, aged 11 and 15. “I cannot send one of my children to school because I have to work, and we have no one to take care of them. In the public health centre, they told me that he is not allowed to get one as he is not registered with the Municipality.”

A LEGAL OVERVIEW OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE FOR CHILDREN

In Belgium, France, Greece, Spain, Sweden and UK: Children of asylum seekers and refugees have the same rights to healthcare as nationals.

BELGIUM: The children of undocumented migrants have free access to vaccinations and preventative care through the Birth and Childhood Office or Child and Family service until the age of six. For all curative care and over the age of six, they need to obtain the AMU like adults.

Unaccompanied minors, if they go to school, have the same access to care as nationals and authorised residents.

FRANCE: Children in France are not considered as undocumented, they do not need a permit to reside. Children of undocumented migrants are entitled to the AME scheme upon arrival in France (without the three-month residence condition), even if their parents are not eligible. The AME is granted for one year.

In France, children can get vaccination for all principal diseases free of charge. Unaccompanied minors are supposed to have the same access to healthcare through the health system as the children of nationals or authorised residents.

GERMANY: Children of asylum seekers and refugees are subject to the same system as adults (48 months of residence in Germany before being integrated into the mainstream system). However, children can receive other care to meet their specific needs (no precision in law). They are entitled to the recommended vaccinations.

Children of undocumented migrants also have the same rights as adults, i.e. they need to request a health insurance voucher, which puts them at risk of being reported to the authorities. Therefore, there is no direct access to vaccination and the only way for children of undocumented migrants to be vaccinated is by paying the costs of the medical consultation (around €45) and the costs of the vaccines (around €70 per vaccine). Unaccompanied minors under the protection of the Youth Office have access to healthcare.

Greece: In theory, children of undocumented migrants should have access to healthcare, as they are explicitly not included in the law prohibiting access to care for undocumented adults beyond emergency care.

In practice, they often only have access to emergency care. However, they have free access to vaccination at Mother and Child Protection Centres (those that haven’t closed down due to the crisis). However, they often have to pay for vaccines and medical consultations, just like all other children without health coverage.

Unaccompanied minors, regardless their status, should have access to the same healthcare as children of undocumented migrants or children of asylum seekers and refugees. However, in Greece, until recent political changes, unaccompanied minors could spend months in detention centres – often in the same cell as adults.

NETHERLANDS: All children can access free vaccination in preventative frontline infant consultations (0-4 years). Children of asylum seekers come under the same specific scheme for asylum seekers as their parents. For curative care, the children of undocumented migrants face the same barriers to care as their parents. There are no specific legal provisions for children of destitute EU citizens who have lost their right to reside and have no health insurance. Unaccompanied minors do not have any specific protection, their access to healthcare depends on their residence status.

SPAIN: Article 3º. a of Law 16/2003 (added by Article 1 of Royal Decree-Law 16/2003) provides that “in any case, foreigners who are less than 18 years old receive care under the same conditions as Spanish citizens.” This provision states clearly that all minors in Spain, regardless of their administrative status, will be granted access to healthcare services, including vaccinations, under the same conditions as Spanish minors (i.e. free of charge). Nonetheless, the acquisition of an individual health card for the children of undocumented migrants is not so easy. Therefore, they are sometimes denied care and/or vaccination. It is clearly a problem of the implementation of the law; public health centres do not know how to deal with these minors and may refuse to take care of them until they have a health card.

SWEDEN: The July 2013 law grants full access to healthcare to children of undocumented migrants below the age of 18. Consequently, all children of authorised residents, asylum seekers and undocumented third-country nationals now have access to free vaccination. In accordance with the national vaccination programme. The vaccination of young children is performed by the health centre, while children at primary school are vaccinated by the school health system. There is a lack of legal clarity on whether children of undocumented EU citizens can access vaccination – in practice, they have to pay the full fees for vaccination.

SWITZERLAND: Children of asylum seekers and refugees have health insurance (if their parents do) which includes vaccination. Children of undocumented migrants have the same access as their parents. Either their parents can afford private health insurance for them (around €40 per month), so children have access to vaccinations; or they cannot pay the contributions and they have to pay all doctor’s fees. Children’s health insurance is compulsory for school attendance.

TURKEY: Asylum seekers must submit a claim to the Social Aid and Solidarity Foundation to obtain access to subsidised healthcare for their children. To this end, they must prove their lack of financial resources and obtain a residence permit giving them a ‘citizen number’. The children of undocumented migrants have no access to prevention or care. Those born in Turkey may have access to free vaccination at a family health centre but they need to be registered in the civil registry. Otherwise, each vaccine costs around €18, added to the €43 medical consultation costs. Unaccompanied minors waiting for a decision on international protection cannot access healthcare, those who are rejected cannot.

UNITED KINGDOM: The children of undocumented migrants have the same entitlement to care as adults. They can register with a GP and receive free vaccinations but they will be charged for secondary healthcare. In practice, children are only accepted in GP practices if at least one of their parents is already registered. Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum or with refugee status enter local authority care, meaning that, like asylum seekers, they are exempt from all charges.

76 The full legislative report on access to healthcare in 12 countries published in May 2015, is available at www.md.m.org/20110010_0100_0055.pdf


78 Royal Decree Act 16/2012
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FRANCE: Children in France are not considered as undocumented, they do not need a permit to reside. Children of undocumented migrants are entitled to the AGM scheme upon arrival in France (without the three-month residence condition), even if their parents are not eligible. The AGM is granted for one year.

In France, children can get vaccination for all principal diseases free of charge. Unaccompanied minors are supposed to have the same access to healthcare through the health system as the children of nationals or authorised residents.

GERMANY: Children of asylum seekers and refugees are subject to the same system as adults (4+ months of residence in Germany before being integrated into the mainstream system). However, children can receive other care to meet their specific needs (no precision in law). They are entitled to the recommended vaccinations. Children of undocumented migrants also have the same rights as adults, i.e. they need to request a health insurance voucher, which puts them at risk of being refused in primary care centres. Therefore, there is no direct access to vaccination and only if they are children of undocumented migrants, they can be vaccinated for €20 (and the costs of the vaccines around €70 per vaccine). Unaccompanied minors do not have any specific protection, their access to healthcare depends on their residence status.

Spain: Article 3 of Law 16/2003 (added by Article 1 of Royal Decree-Law 16/2003) provides that “in any case, foreigners who are less than 18 years old receive healthcare under the same conditions as Spanish citizens.” This provision states clearly that all minors in Spain, regardless of their administrative status, will be granted access to healthcare services, including vaccinations, under the same conditions as Spanish minors (i.e. free of charge). Nonetheless, the acquisition of an individual health card for the children of undocumented migrants is not so easy. Therefore, they are sometimes denied care and/or vaccination. It is clearly a problem of the implementation of the law; public health centres do not know how to deal with these minors and may refuse to take care of them until they have a health card.

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SWITZERLAND: Children of asylum seekers and refugees have health insurance (if their parents do) which includes vaccination. Children of undocumented migrants have the same access as their parents. Either their parents can afford private health insurance for them (around €40 per month), so children have access to vaccinations; or they cannot pay the contributions and they have to pay all doctor’s fees. Children’s health insurance is compulsory for school attendance.

UNITED KINGDOM: The children of undocumented migrants have the same entitlement to care as adults. They can register with a GP and receive free vaccinations but they will be charged for secondary healthcare. In practice, children are only accepted in GP practices if at least one of their parents is already registered. Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum or with refugee status enter local authority care, meaning that, like asylum seekers, they are exempt from all charges.
Mr and Mrs D. are Syrian Christians. They were living in Aleppo with their children, aged two and eight, when they had to escape from war and persecution. They arrived in Paris (France) in September 2014. With the current housing shortage, they were advised to leave the region and decided to try their luck in Nice, where they requested asylum. When the two-year-old daughter became ill, they visited the MdM clinic. The family hadn’t eaten for 24 hours. MdM alerted the DDCS again and received the same answer that there was no budget. MdM then made the exceptional decision to pay for a few nights in a hotel for the family. After alerting its network, the only individual who proposed to host the family. More than a month after their arrival, the D. family obtained a place in a Centre for Asylum Seekers in another Department. When they arrived in Paris (France), the D. family would have spent a month living on the streets if an individual had not offered to take them in.

While many politicians denounce the humanitarian catastrophe taking place in Syria and talk about hosting Syrian refugees in France, the D. family would have spent a month living on the streets if an individual had not offered to take them in.

MdM France – Nice – October 2014
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When the two-year-old daughter became ill, they visited the MdM clinic. The family hadn’t eaten for 24 hours. MdM alerted the DDCS again and received the same answer that there was no budget. MdM then made the exceptional decision to pay for a few nights in a hotel for the family. After alerting its network, the only acceptable answer was provided by a private individual who proposed to host the family. More than a month after their arrival, the D family obtained a place in a Centre for Asylum Seekers in another Department.

In Europe, an overwhelming majority of patients seen by MdM programmes in 2014 were foreign nationals (93.6%) 1.

PROPORTION OF WOMEN BY COUNTRY SURVEYED

NATURALNESS AND GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN

In Europe, an overwhelming majority of patients seen by MdM programmes in 2014 were foreign nationals (93.6%).

PATIENTS’ GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS BY COUNTRY SURVEYED (%)

Mr and Mrs D. are Syrian Christians. They were living in Aleppo with their children, aged two and eight, when they had to escape from war and persecution. They arrived in Paris (France) in September 2014. With the current housing shortage, they were advised to leave the region and decided to try their luck in Nice, where they requested asylum. Due to a lack of funds, the Departmental Social Cohesion Directorate (DDCS) refused to allocate them housing. The family is homeless, sleeping in the Armenian Church every now and then.

When the two-year-old daughter became ill, they visited the MdM clinic. The family hadn’t eaten for 24 hours. MdM alerted the DDCS again and received the same answer that there was no budget. MdM then made the exceptional decision to pay for a few nights in a hotel for the family. After alerting its network, the only ‘alternative’ came from an individual who proposed to host the family. More than a month after their arrival, the D family obtained a place in a Centre for Asylum Seekers in another Department.

While many politicians denounce the humanitarian catastrophe taking place in Syria and talk about hosting Syrian refugees in France, the D family would have spent a month living on the streets if an individual had not offered to take them in.

MdM France – Nice – October 2014

80. Information provided by the MdM Delegation Ile de France.
81. European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the situation of unaccompanied minors in the EU (2012/2263(INI)).
Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Middle East (9.3%) and the Americas (essentially Latin America: 8.9%).

In this report, the Middle East comprises Afghanistan, and Middle East (9.3%) and the Americas (15.6%), Asia (11.6%), Maghreb (11.4%), Near (29.0%), followed by the European Union (50.2%), political-Religious, ethnic, sexual orientation (50.2%), territorial and barriers to accessing healthcare in the host country. This is yet more proof to deconstruct the myth of migration for health.

As every year, health reasons were extremely rare (3.0 % in Europe, which is a similar rate to that reported in 2008, 2012 and 2013: 0.9% in Turkey). There is no correlation between the number of people who migrate for health reasons, among others, and the level of legal restrictions and barriers to accessing healthcare in the host country. This is yet more proof to deconstruct the myth of migration for health.

As in 2013, in the European countries, the reasons most often cited for migration were, overwhelmingly, economic-Religious, political (50.2%), territorial and barriers to accessing healthcare in the host country. This is yet more proof to deconstruct the myth of migration for health.

Among the migrant EU citizens encountered at MdM, 62.3% were from Romania, which corresponds to the significant numbers of Roma people from Romania reached by MdM’s mobile units in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, and referred to the clinic (n=325 people). People from Bulgaria form the second most significant EU nationality (14.8%). followed by EU migrants from Poland, Portugal, Spain and Italy.

The nationalities most frequently encountered varied from one location to another: including the Maghreb) remains the top continent of origin for patients seen in Belgium and France, while this is Asia for patients seen in London. In Greece, Greek citizens came first, followed by people from the Near and Middle East. In Germany, EU migrants came first, followed by German citizens.

TOP TEN MOST FREQUENTLY RECORDED NATIONALITIES, BY COUNTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<tr>
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LENGTH OF STAY IN THE COUNTRY BY FOREIGN NATIONALS

On average, in CH, DE, ES, NL and UK, foreign citizens had been living in the country for 6.5 years; half of them had been there for between three and eight years. This illustrates once again that migration for the purposes of seeking healthcare is a myth, as the patients had already been living in Europe for long periods at their first visit to MdM clinics.

REASONS FOR MIGRATION

As in 2013, in the European countries, the reasons most often cited for migration were, overwhelmingly, economic -Religious, political (50.2%), territorial and barriers to accessing healthcare in the host country. This is yet more proof to deconstruct the myth of migration for health.

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Among the migrant EU citizens encountered at MdM, 62.3% were from Romania, which corresponds to the significant numbers of Roma people from Romania reached by MdM’s mobile units in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, and referred to the clinic (n=1,035 people). People from Bulgaria form the second most significant EU nationality (16.4%), followed by EU migrants from Poland, Portugal, Spain and Italy.

The nationalities most frequently encountered varied from one location to another. As such, (including the Maghreb) remains the top continent of origin for patients seen in Belgium and France, while this is Asia for patients seen in London. In Greece, Greek citizens came first, followed by people from the Near and Middle East. In Germany, EU migrants came first, followed by German citizens.

### LENGTH OF STAY IN THE COUNTRY BY FOREIGN NATIONALS

On average, in CH, DE, ES, NL and UK, foreign citizens had been living in the country for 6.5 years; half of them had been there for between three and eight years. This illustrates once again that migration for the purposes of seeking healthcare is a myth, as the patients had already been living in Europe for long periods at their first visit to MdM clinics.

### REASONS FOR MIGRATION

As in 2013, in the European countries, the reasons most often cited for migration were, overwhelmingly, economic− (50.2%), political (19.3%) in total, including 8.9% to escape from war) and family related (whether to join or follow someone: 14.6%, or to escape from family conflict: 7.8%).

As every year, health reasons were extremely rare (3.0 % in Europe, which is a similar rate to that reported in 2008, 2012 and 2013: 0.9% in Turkey). There is no correlation between the number of people who migrate for health reasons, among others, and the level of legal restrictions and barriers to accessing healthcare in the host country. This is yet more proof to deconstruct the myth of migration for health.

#### Table: TOP TEN MOST FREQUENTLY RECORD NATIONALITIES, BY COUNTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>CH</th>
<th>ES</th>
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<th>UK</th>
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#### Table: Length of stay in the country by foreign nationals

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#### Table: Reasons for migration by country (%)

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<td>To ensure your children’s future</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>13.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>10.5</td>
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### Missing data (%)

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</tbody>
</table>

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83 In this report, the Middle East comprises Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine–Gaza, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

84 In 2008, 2012 and 2013, 6.0%, 1.6% and 2.3% of the people cited health as one of their reasons for migration respectively.

85 In 2008, 2012 and 2013, 19.3%, 14.6% and 14.6% of the people cited health as one of their reasons for migration respectively.
We had to drive far out into the countryside to a place near St Omer to visit the last, and most shocking, settlement where a group of 20 to 30 Syrians were living in a ditch. As we squelched down the remote muddy lane in the rain, it was hard to believe anyone could be living there. To our left were tilled fields, now just mud, and to our right were bushes, leading down into a long ditch. I had turned up my trousers to the knees to avoid getting muddied and I thought I looked silly. When we got closer a group of boys appeared from the bushes, with an adult. Recognising our logo (MdM) they huddled beneath our umbrella. Only the adult spoke, he was from Aleppo, as were all the boys, who stood with bare feet on the tops of their wet and mud-caked shoes. I stopped thinking about my trousers.

The boys were aged between 10 and 15 and were muddied and unwashed, all there without their families. The ten-year-old was scratching because of scabies. They took me down into the ditch beneath the tarpaulins to a small fire. They camped in this far-flung location because there was a service station nearby where they could try to board trucks.

“There is so much we don’t have here, still it is better than Aleppo. But we will not be here long,” the adult told me. My French colleague later told me this was a common delusion, perhaps a necessary one, and that it usually took many months to cross the channel. So how could children be living for long periods of time in muddy ditches in a rich, supposedly civilised country such as France?”

Testimony written by MdM UK in France – Calais – Saint Omer – November 2014

Lastly, no significant difference was observed in the frequency of health reasons for migration between EU citizens and other migrants: both being very low (2.9% and 2.5% respectively, p=0.68). Of course, the most frequent other reasons for migration were very different between the two groups: EU citizens had migrated mostly for economic (8.6%) and family reasons (to join or follow someone: 22.9%) and the others had done it for the four main reasons mentioned above.

John, aged 25, from Eritrea, keeps smiling as he talks. It is a grin that seems to mask the fatigue and exhaustion of a long journey and all that he does not want to say...

“I was born in Eritrea, I left for Sudan and Uganda. In 2008, I got a diploma in Statistics. In Uganda, I have worked and earned about $6,000 to leave. I knew that it was tough in France, but not as much as it is. In England, I would like to resume my studies and open my own survey company.”

MdM France – Calais – 2014

| REASONS FOR MIGRATION: COMPARISON BETWEEN EU CITIZENS (EXCEPT NATIONALS) AND OTHER MIGRANTS (%) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| EU CITIZENS (n=418) | OTHERS (n=3082) | p |
| ECONOMIC REASONS: UNABLE TO EARN A LIVING IN HOME COUNTRY | 81.8 | 48.3 | <0.001 |
| POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, ETHNIC, SEXUAL ORIENTATION | 1.2 | 24.9 | <0.001 |
| TO ESCAPE FROM WAR | 0.5 | 10.6 | <0.001 |
| TO JOIN OR FOLLOW SOMEONE | 22.2 | 9.6 | <0.001 |
| FAMILY CONFLICTS | 3.3 | 7.0 | 0.004 |
| TO ENSURE YOUR CHILDREN’S FUTURE | 0.0 | 1.5 | <0.001 |
| PERSONAL HEALTH REASONS | 2.9 | 2.5 | 0.68 |
| TO STUDY | 2.4 | 3.9 | 0.14 |
| OTHERS | 5.0 | 9.5 | <0.001 |
| TOTAL | 125.3 | 122.8 | 0.88 |

Migration policies should focus on protection. Migrants dreaming of asylum in the UK, Calais, France 2014
“We had to drive far out into the countryside to a place near St Omer to visit the last, and most shocking, settlement where a group of 20 to 30 Syrians were living in a ditch. As we squelched down the remote muddy lane in the rain, it was hard to believe anyone could be living there. To our left were tilled fields, now just mud, and to our right were bushes, leading down into a long ditch. I had turned up my trousers to the knees to avoid getting muddied and I thought I looked silly. When we got closer a group of boys appeared from the bushes, with an adult. Recognising our logo (MdM) they huddled beneath our umbrella. Only the adult spoke, he was from Aleppo, as were all the boys, who stood with bare feet on the tops of their wet and mud-caked shoes. I stopped thinking about my trousers.

The boys were aged between 10 and 15 and were muddied and unwashed, all there without their families. The ten-year-old was scratching because of scabies. They took me down into the ditch beneath the tarpaulins to a small fire. They camped in this far-flung location because there was a service station nearby where they could try to board trucks.

“There is so much we don’t have here, still it is better than Aleppo. But we will not be here long,” the adult told me. My French colleague later told me this was a common delusion, perhaps a necessary one, and that it usually took many months to cross the Channel. So how could children be living for long periods of time in muddy ditches in a rich, supposedly civilised country such as France?”

Testimony written by MdM UK in France – Calais – Saint Omer – November 2014

Lastly, no significant difference was observed in the frequency of health reasons for migration between EU citizens and other migrants: both being very low (2.9% and 2.5% respectively, p=0.68). Of course, the most frequent other reasons for migration were very different between the two groups: EU citizens had migrated mostly for economic (88.8%) and family reasons (to join or follow someone: 22.9%) and the others had done it for the four main reasons mentioned above.

John, aged 25, from Eritrea, keeps smiling as he talks. It is a grin that seems to mask the fatigue and exhaustion of a long journey and all that he does not want to say...

“I was born in Eritrea, I left for Sudan and Uganda. I moved a lot. In 2008, I got a diploma in Statistics. In Uganda, I have worked and earned about $6,000 to leave. I knew that it was tough in France, but not as much as it is. In England, I would like to resume my studies and open my own survey company.”

MdM France – Calais – 2014

### Reasons for Migration: Comparison between EU Citizens (except nationals) and other migrants (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>EU Citizens (n=418)</th>
<th>Others (n=3082)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic reasons, unable to earn a living in home country</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political, religious, ethnic, sexual orientation</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To escape war</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join or follow someone</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflicts</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure your children’s future</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal health reasons</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To study</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125.3</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority (66.0%) of all people seen at the MDG centres in the nine European countries do not have permission to reside; 56.7% of citizens from non-EU countries and 9.3% of EU citizens (who have been in the country for over three months and do not have adequate financial resources and/or valid healthcare coverage) live there. 62.3% of the EU citizens and 66.2% of the citizens from non-EU countries had no permission to reside in the country where they were interviewed (p=0.001).

Since the adoption of European Directive 2004/386 on the right of citizens of the EU and their family members to move and reside freely, EU nationals who do not have adequate financial resources or health insurance have lost their right to reside in an EU country other than their own. Article 7 of the Directive, states clearly: 'All Union citizens shall have the right of residence on the territory of another Member State for a period of longer than three months if they [...] have sufficient resources for themselves and their family members not to become a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State during their period of residence and have comprehensive sickness insurance cover in the host Member State.'

As a consequence of Directive 2004/386, EU citizens staying for more than three months in a host Member State without sufficient resources or healthcare coverage find themselves in the same situation as undocumented migrants from outside the EU. Belgium and France have expanded their system of medical coverage for undocumented migrants to include EU nationals without permission to reside. As undocumented migrants, EU citizens who have lost their permit to reside can also be subject to expulsion proceedings. (stricter though than for citizens of non-EU countries.)

The average proportion of people without a residence permit covers wide disparities from one country to the other: Switzerland (16.6%), Greece (19%), and Germany (38.9%) had the lowest figures. In contrast, 94.2% of patients seen in the Netherlands; 83.9% of those seen in Belgium; 67.9% of those seen in France; and 63.5% of those seen in Spain were in this situation.

In Germany, 29.1% of patients were EU nationals who had lost their permission to reside (compared with an average rate of 8% in the other countries). Additionally, 18.2% of patients were EU nationals who had arrived in the country less than three months ago (compared with fewer than 3% in the other countries except Sweden) and 5.0% were EU nationals with permission to reside. Germany was the country with the largest share of EU citizens (excluding German nationals), which may reflect its economic attractiveness in a Europe in crisis.

In Greece, the overwhelming majority of patients have the right to reside in Greece (83%). This is due to the large numbers of Greek and foreign citizens who do not need a permit (374/4), the number of foreign citizens with permission to reside (20.9%) and asylum seekers (11%).

In Spain, 25.9% of patients were non-EU nationals with a valid residence permit (compared with fewer than 6% in most other countries). This is due to mass unemployment and economic problems in the country (which have primarily affected immigrants).

In Switzerland, a significant majority of patients were asylum seekers (75.5%). In contrast to the other countries surveyed (asylum seekers represented 15.3% of the total in London and 13.4% in France). The main programme in Switzerland is actually aimed at asylum seekers housed in three reception facilities in the canton of Neuchâtel and accounted for a majority of the patients.

In Sweden, 47.3% of patients had no permission to reside; a quarter were EU nationals staying for less than three months and 44.3% had a residence permit in another EU country.

In London, 57.5% of those coming to the centre were foreign nationals who did not have permission to reside and 15.3% were asylum seekers; 11.6% had a visa (the highest proportion observed in the European countries of the survey). In Istanbul, 63.2% of patients had no permission to reside; 16.0% were seeking asylum and 12.4% were recent immigrants (less than 30 days).

In Belgium, asylum seekers (through AME in France and AMU in Belgium) remain very common (compared with fewer than 6% in most other countries). In Istanbul, the programme is specifically geared towards undocumented migrants from outside the EU.

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### Administrative Status by Country (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>CH</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>EL</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>JP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens of Non-EU Country without permission to reside</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU citizens with no permission to reside</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total without permission to reside</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Residence Permit Requirement (Nationals)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum Seeker (Application or Appeal Ongoing)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid Residence Permit</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU National Staying for Less Than Three Months (No Residence Permit Required)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visas of All Types</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU National with Permission to Reside</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Permit from Another EU Country</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Situation Concerning Right to Remain</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with Permission to Reside</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data (%)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Without adequate financial resources and/or healthcare coverage
B. In France, children do not require a residence permit and are therefore included in the category
C. Or equivalent situation (accompanied children – 30 days)
D. Switzerland, short-stay students
E. Adequate financial resources and valid healthcare coverage
F. Including supplementary/family/maternity protection

Overall, in the nine European countries, 43.4% of citizens from non-EU countries were or had been involved in an asylum application (N=4,440). Only a very small minority of asylum seekers were granted refugee status (5.6%) while four out of ten had already been rejected (39.6%). Finally, those affected by the Dublin III/Eurodac regulation were rather low (between 1% and 3%) except in Stockholm and Munich where they respectively represented 10.5% and 10.3% of the total.
LIVING CONDITIONS

It must be noted, as every year, that the vast majority of people who presented at the MDM clinics had a range of social vulnerability factors that were determinant in their poor health status.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Overall, in the seven European countries where the question was asked, 64.7% of patients were living in unstable or temporary accommodation (this was particularly common in Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands). This proportion stood at 63.0% in Istanbul.

Of the patients seen in eight European countries (all but Greece where the question was not asked), 9.7% were homeless (up to 20.0% in Stockholm) and 16.4% had been provided with accommodation for more than 15 days by an organisation (up to 83.0% in Switzerland where most patients are met at asylum seeker centres).

The most frequent housing condition was to be living with family members or friends (38.8%, up to 62.6% in France) or to have their own flat or house; as in 2013, homeless people were extremely rare.

29.5% of those questioned in Europe deemed their accommodation to be harmful to their health or that of their children. In Istanbul, this proportion reached 57.9%.

WORK AND INCOME

A slim majority of people attending MDM centres in Europe had no permission to reside and therefore did not have permission to work. It is therefore unsurprising that only 21.9% of them reported an activity to earn a living in the eight European countries (question not asked in Belgium).

Almost all the people surveyed in the eight European countries (91.3%) were living below the poverty line:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage Below Poverty Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and one third (32.6%) said they could rely on such support only sometimes. In Istanbul, 86.1% of patients were isolated: 29.4% said they could never rely on anyone for moral support and 56.7% said they could do so only occasionally. Altogether men more often reported being isolated and without support than women (p<0.01).

SOCIAL ISOLATION

When asked about moral support, one in two people said they could rarely or never rely on support if they needed it: 16.4% of patients seen in seven European countries replied that they never had anyone they could rely on or turn to if the need arose. When asked about social support, one in two patients said they could rarely or never rely on support if they needed it: 18.4% of patients seen in seven European countries replied that they never had anyone they could rely on or turn to if the need arose.

AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED BY COUNTRY (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>53.2</td>
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<td>17.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
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<td>EL</td>
<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>FR</td>
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<td>NL</td>
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<td>SE</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bilal, aged 38, from Sudan, is undocumented and cannot get healthcare coverage or work. After a year of procedures his asylum application was rejected and he had to leave the centre for asylum seekers.

After living on the streets, he joined a group of around 100 homeless ex-asylum seekers who subsequently squatted a church and office buildings. He is now living in a derelict office building with small, cramped spaces. The windows in the building cannot be opened and there is no heating. There is only one shower, with no warm water. The group is dependent on charity from the neighbourhood and volunteers for food and other basic necessities.

Bilal has been an insulin-dependent diabetic since he was 10 years old. When Bilal was still an asylum seeker, he had access to medication. When MDM met Bilal, he was very sick, with extremely high blood sugar levels. With MDM’s intervention, Bilal now sees a general practitioner and has a small refrigerator with insulin and syringes. He also has regular check-ups by a diabetes specialist in hospital.

MDDM Netherlands – Amsterdam – November 2014

Karl, aged 40, is from a German minority in Romania. ‘I came from Romania about one month ago. I came to work there as a security guard. The problem is that they tell you you will earn €400 a month, but in reality you do not. I earned only €180 a month. I had health insurance there, through my work, which was a good thing. But when I lost my job I lost my insurance as well. My cousin told me that he had a job for me here, but when I came it was not available anymore. Now that I am here I want to give it a chance. But it is a vicious circle. I need to have a registered address at the municipality to get a job, but to have an address you need money to pay for housing. I have to apply each time for a place to sleep and this way it is very hard to find a job.

I found out about your organisation through another clinic for homeless people in Munich. They said I need an X-ray, but they do not have doctors that do this for free. They said you could help. I’ve had bronchitis for a couple of days. I’ve never had this before. I stay in place with 16 men in one room. It is very wet and I am not very healthy. I think my living situation is now affecting my health.’

MDM Germany – Munich – December 2014

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©KATErINA KANTzIKI

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It must be noted, as every year that the vast majority of people who presented at the MDM clinics had a range of social vulnerability factors that were determinant in their poor health status.

**HOUSING CONDITIONS**

Overall, in the seven European countries where the question was asked, 64.7% of patients were living in unstable or temporary accommodation50 (this was particularly common in Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands). This proportion stood at 63.0% in Istanbul.

Of the patients seen in eight European countries (all but Greece where the question was not asked), 9.7% were homeless (up to 20.0% in Stockholm) and 16.4% had been provided with accommodation for more than 10 days by an organisation (up to 83.0% in Switzerland where most patients are met at asylum seeker centres).

The most frequent housing condition was to be living with family members or friends (38.9%, up to 62.0% in France) or to have his/her own home (29.5%), which by no means always represented stable accommodation and furthermore could also be overcrowded. In Istanbul 75.2% lived in their own flat or house; as in 2013, homeless people were extremely rare.

29.5% of those questioned in Europe51 deemed their accommodation to be harmful to their health or that of their children. In Istanbul, this proportion reached 57.9%.

Bilal, aged 38, from Sudan, is undocumented and cannot get healthcare coverage or work. After years of procedures his asylum application was rejected and he had to leave the centre for asylum seekers.

After living on the streets, he joined a group of around 100 homeless ex-asylum seekers who subsequently squatted a church and office buildings. He is now living in a derelict office building with small, cramped spaces. The windows in the building cannot be opened and there is no heating. There is only one shower, with no warm water. The group is dependent on charity from the neighbourhood and volunteers for food and other basic necessities.

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**WORK AND INCOME**

A slim majority of people attending MDM centres in Europe had no permission to reside and therefore did not have permission to work. It is therefore unsurprising that only 21.9% of them reported an activity to earn a living in the eight European countries (question not asked in Belgium).

Almost all the people surveyed in the eight European countries (91.3%) were living below the poverty line55. Of the patients seen in eight European countries, 27.6% in NL, 16.3% in SE, 69.6% in UK.

**SOCIAL ISOLATION**

When asked about moral support54, one in two people said they could rarely or never rely on such support only sometimes. In Istanbul, 86.1% of patients were isolated: 29.4% said they could never rely on anyone for moral support and 56.7% said they could do so only occasionally. Altogether, men more often reported being isolated and without support than women (p=0.01).

**AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED BY COUNTRY (%)**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<td>AT</td>
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</tr>
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<td>CH</td>
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<td>DE</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ES</td>
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<td>FR</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<td>TR</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND, HOUSED IN NUCLEAR SHELTERS OPENED TO ACCOMMODATE THE SURGE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN 2014**

10.5% said they could rely on anyone for moral support only sometimes. In Istanbul, 86.1% of patients were isolated: 29.4% said they could never rely on anyone for moral support and 56.7% said they could do so only occasionally. Altogether, men more often reported being isolated and without support than women (p=0.01).
In Germany, 73.6% of patients only had access to emergency healthcare. 15.5% were entitled to healthcare coverage in another European country (which is in line with the high number of Europeans among the patients received, as noted above). In Munich, asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants are required to request a health voucher from the municipal social welfare office in order to access free healthcare. However, civil servants including health personnel have a duty to report undocumented migrants to the police, which creates a huge barrier to healthcare as undocumented migrants fear being arrested. For emergency care, a recommendation was issued by the government stating that health personnel are not obliged to report undocumented migrants. However, this recommendation is not binding and has not been widely disseminated. As a result, the MDM team has been confronted with an undocumented patient being reported to the police at an emergency unit and has held a meeting with hospital staff from the five Münich public hospitals to inform them about the option not to report undocumented migrants in the case of emergencies—which should be a duty not to report.

In Greece, 84.9% of patients had no healthcare coverage at all. Foreign nationals without permission to reside have no rights to any healthcare coverage. As the social crisis in Greece worsened, more and more Greek nationals and foreign citizens with permission to reside also lost their healthcare coverage due to the lack of contributions through their employment or their inability to pay for it.

In the Netherlands, 82.5% of patients seen in Amsterdam and The Hague could access general practitioners, albeit with a financial contribution, and 14.9% had no access at all.

In Spain, 61.6% of patients seen only had access to emergency care. While undocumented migrants are supposed to have access to free emergency care, in practice cases where they are treated for the emergency care they received were witnessed by MDM as well as being reported by the Ombudsman in Spain.

In Sweden, half of the patients (47.5%) had no access to healthcare at all, a quarter (28.7%) had access to some subsidised healthcare—the by paying a reduced fee for a defined package of care—and 15.8% were EU citizens with coverage in another country.

In Switzerland, 74.9% of patients seen had full healthcare coverage. They were mainly asylum seekers, who have the right to healthcare during their application process (although the procedures involved can be complex and the context rather restrictive). The other patients seen either did not have or no longer had any (adequate or effective) form of healthcare coverage.

In Turkey, the vast majority of those consulted had no coverage at all for their health expenses (98.7%).

The absence of any coverage concerned 70.4% of migrant EU citizens in Europe, and 15.1% had access to emergency services only. They were even less frequently fully covered than nationals of non-EU countries (3.7% versus 8.3%, p<0.001), although 8.1% of them had healthcare rights in another EU country (A).
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In Greece, 84.9% of patients had no healthcare coverage at all. For emergency care, all individuals without permission to reside have no rights to any healthcare coverage. As the social crisis in Greece worsened, more and more Greek nationals and foreign citizens with permission to reside also lost their healthcare coverage due to the lack of contributions through their employment or their inability to pay for it.

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C. Including those who have to pay part of the costs of the GP consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Access to Emergency Services Only (%)</th>
<th>Full Healthcare Coverage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>74.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In London, almost all patients (82.7%) had no access to the NHS at all when they came to the MDM clinic; they had not been able to register yet with GPs; the entry point to the healthcare system. This was in a political context where the government was (and still is) increasingly questioning access to healthcare for immigrants. Only 9.0% already had free access to a GP.

The proportion of patients with no healthcare coverage was particularly high in France (52.3%) and Belgium (91.9%). These rates can mostly be explained by the fact that the centres concerned (Nice, Saint-Denis, Brussels and Amersfoort) only accept patients with no effective healthcare coverage, while people who do have healthcare coverage are redirected to facilities within the mainstream healthcare system. In theory, undocumented migrants in both countries have relatively favourable conditions of access to healthcare; in practice, however, administrative barriers and the time taken to process files and applications for periodic renewal of access increase the frequency of situations and interim periods where they have no effective healthcare coverage.

Zoé, a 60-year-old Moroccan woman, is undocumented. She lives at her sister’s home. Zoé visits MDM for a regular consultation and anticipates possible problems due to her age. She explains how difficult it is to stand for hours outside in the cold with many other patients who do not have access to the healthcare system. Nevertheless, she doesn’t want to postpone the visit and wait too long until it is too late. Zoé had urgent medical coverage (AMU specifically for undocumented migrants) for a while, but she had to renew it too often; besides, it was hard to get to the AMUs each time. Zoé sums up the absurdity of the situation: “Why don’t they offer at least one-year medical cards? These cards cover only 15 days and, if you are not sick within this period, it’s useless. When you are sick, it is too late. Zoé had urgent medical coverage (AMU, emergency care for undocumented migrants, which should be free access to emergency care, in practice cases where they are asked for the emergency care they received were witnessed by MDM as well as reported by the Ombudsman in Spain.”

Zoé would like to work in order to contribute to her family’s needs. “It is possible to work undetected but you can’t contribute to anything. You are nobody when working undetected. You make a bit of money, but you have no rights to healthcare. I don’t know much about the Belgian system but it is unfair sometimes.” Since the national law does not specify the valid period of the AMU, each AMU defines the period, which varies from one day to six months.

In Greece, 84.9% of patients had no healthcare coverage at all. For emergency care, all individuals without permission to reside have no rights to any healthcare coverage. As the social crisis in Greece worsened, more and more Greek nationals and foreign citizens with permission to reside also lost their healthcare coverage due to the lack of contributions through their employment or their inability to pay for it.

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In Turkey, the vast majority of those consulting had no coverage at all for their health expenses (98.7%).

The absence of any coverage concerned 70.4% of migrant EU citizens in Europe. And 15.1% had access to emergency services only. They were even less frequently fully covered than nationals of non-EU countries (3.7% versus 8.3%, p<0.001), although 81% of them had healthcare rights in another EU country.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GIVING UP SEEKING HEALTHCARE

One patient in five (20.4%) said that they had given up trying to access healthcare or medical treatment in the course of the previous 12 months104 and up to 61.2% reported the same thing in Istanbul. The frequency of people giving up seeking healthcare has significant differences between France and Spain, but should be taken as an indicator of those migrants coming to MDM do not know about them, as there has been no communication about these specific measures (such as in Valencia and the Canary Islands). Some of the patients interviewed in 2014 had already been to MDM before answering the questionnaire (and had thus already been informed of their rights), which explains the decreasing number of patients giving up seeking care.

DENIAL OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Denial of access to healthcare refers to any behaviour adopted voluntarily by a healthcare professional that results, directly or indirectly, in failure to provide healthcare or medical treatment appropriate to the patient’s situation. Denial of access to healthcare (over the previous 12 months) was reported by 15.2% of patients seen by MDM in Europe105 in Istanbul, 37.1% of the patients experienced this situation and a quarter in Spain.

BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE IN SEVEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND IN TURKEY (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Did not try to access healthcare services</th>
<th>Administrative problems</th>
<th>Language barriers</th>
<th>Healthcare coverage expenses</th>
<th>Fear of being reported</th>
<th>Other reasons</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sonia (1.0%)

Sonia was a 26-month-old girl who had been left in a CPAS in December 2014. After his wife’s death, Ahmed could not work and take care of his daughter. He applied for money from the state. I was always independent, until today. The last request to the CPAS was finally rejected, as the CPAS stated that the father was financially responsible for his daughter’s operation costs. The surgery was delayed. The father worked hard but still could not cover the bill. Three requests were rejected.

In 2014, in severe pain, Miriam visited MDM Belgium, which referred her to a hospital. She had had these pains for a while but did not dare to go the hospital because of the bill left from her daughter’s surgery. Miriam was operated on for an abscess in the brain, but the infection could not be controlled. In addition, the medical staff discovered that Miriam had diabetes, which she was not aware of. Miriam died in hospital a few weeks later. Her daughter was 26 months old.

After his wife’s death, Ahmed could not work and take care of his daughter on his own and Sonia was placed in a foster family. Ahmed and Miriam unsuccessfully looked for work and finally moved to Belgium, where they also got undeclared jobs. Unfortunately, the patient did not have healthcare coverage at that time. The patient did not have knowledge or understanding of the system

Maria is a 39-year-old unemployed Greek nurse. She had healthcare coverage until 2009. Earning about €4000 per month, she has an undeclared job as a care worker for an elderly woman. "My income covers accommodation and food. I was pregnant and without healthcare coverage. I could afford neither the cost of required examinations nor the medications".

In Greece, thanks to the new presidential decree of 5 June 2014, anyone living legally in Greece and without healthcare coverage can receive a free examination at a hospital. Nonetheless, this decree is not well known or applied. Therefore, its enforcement is crucial. Medical workers provide printed versions of the law and explain it to health professionals. They explain each patient’s case and then follow it up. Maria was able to have free examinations and delivery at the hospital in safe conditions. Nevertheless, as vaccines or drugs are sometimes not available at the hospital, her baby is still medically monitored and vaccinated by MDM services.

MDM Greece – Chania – September 2014

The story of Said, a 22-year-old from Turkey, demonstrates the misunderstanding by the medical staff of the new 2013 law giving access to undocumented migrants to healthcare “that cannot be deferred”103. I tried to get an appointment for a doctor’s consultation but was given the information that a social security number is needed to book an appointment and that I needed to pay €35 for the visit. Then they told me that I could only get treatment if I was an asylum seeker and referred me to a hospital instead. I told them what doctors the World Sweden had told me: that the doctors only need €5. I then asked the staff if they knew about the new law and they did not.

MDM Sweden – Stockholm – October 2014

BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Only 23.0% of all patients surveyed in seven European countries and in Turkey had experienced no difficulty in accessing healthcare before going to an MDM clinic102.

Another third (33.9%) had not tried to access healthcare; with huge differences between France (22.9%) at the bottom and the UK (52.2%) at the top. While some of these people may not have needed healthcare, it is likely that others have internalised the various barriers to accessing healthcare to such an extent that they did not even try to seek it.

As in the previous surveys, the four reasons most frequently cited by patients seen in Europe were related to:

- financial barriers (27.9%), a combination of charges for consultations and treatment, upfront payments and the prohibitive cost of healthcare coverage contributions;
- administrative problems (21.9%), including restrictive legislation and difficulties in collecting all the documentation needed to obtain any kind of healthcare coverage, as well as administrative mal-functioning;
- a lack of knowledge or understanding of the healthcare system and of their rights (14.9%);
- language barriers (12.7%). Yet, 54.8% (CAP) of the consultations required the assistance of an interpreter – whether this was fulfilled (33.7% had an interpreter, in person or on the phone) or not (15.5%). This seems to indicate that the language barrier is under-reported.

It is very different in Istanbul where four situations are reported by more than 40% of patients, i.e. by a much higher proportion of patients than in Europe: the absence of any previous recourse to healthcare (45.9%), the cost of consultations or treatment (44.6%), the language barrier (40.9%) and the fear of being reported or arrested (45.9%). The proportion of patients reporting a bad previous experience in the healthcare system is also particularly high (216% versus 2.3% on average in Europe, p<0.001). Only 1% of patients said that they had no difficulties when seeking care (versus 23% in Europe, p<0.001). All these dramatic differences reflect the tremendous difficulties that migrants face to access healthcare for migrants (particularly those undocumented) in Turkey.

In 2014, in severe pain, Miriam visited MDM Belgium, which referred her to a hospital. She had had these pains for a while but did not dare to go the hospital because of the bill left from her daughter’s surgery. Miriam was operated on for an abscess in the brain, but the infection could not be controlled. In addition, the medical staff discovered that Miriam had diabetes, which she was not aware of. Miriam died in hospital a few weeks later. Her daughter was 26 months old.

After his wife’s death, Ahmed could not work and take care of his daughter on his own and Sonia was placed in a foster family. Ahmed and Miriam unsuccessfully looked for work and finally moved to Belgium, where they also got undeclared jobs. Unfortunately, the patient did not have healthcare coverage at that time. The patient did not have knowledge or understanding of the system
BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Only 23.0% of all patients surveyed in seven European countries (Turkey, Spain, Sweden, UK, Denmark, France, and Greece) had experienced no difficulty in accessing healthcare before going to an MDM clinic. Another third (33.9%) had not tried to access healthcare; with huge differences between France (3%) and the UK (52.2%) at the top. While some of these people may not have needed healthcare, it is also likely that others have internalized the various barriers to accessing healthcare to such an extent that they did not even try to seek care.

As in the previous surveys, the four reasons most frequently cited by patients seen in Europe related to:

- financial barriers (27.9%), a combination of charges for consultations and treatment, upfront payments and the prohibitive cost of healthcare coverage contributions;
- administrative problems (21.9%), including restrictive legislation and difficulties in collecting all the documentation needed to obtain any kind of healthcare coverage, as well as administrative mal-functioning;
- a lack of knowledge or understanding of the healthcare system and of their rights (14.9%);
- language barriers (12.7%). Yet, 54.8% (CAP) of the consultations required the assistance of an interpreter – whether this need was fulfilled (35.7%) had an interpreter, in person or on the phone or not (15.5%). This seems to indicate that the language barrier is under-reported.

It is very different in Istanbul where four situations are reported by more than 40% of patients, i.e. by a much higher proportion of patients than in Europe: the absence of any previous recourse to healthcare (45.9%), the cost of consultations or treatment (44.6%), the fear of being reported or arrested (45.9%). The proportion of patients reporting a bad previous experience in the healthcare system is also particularly high (21.9% versus 2.3% on average in Europe, p<0.001). Only 1% of patients said they had no difficulties when seeking care (versus 23% in Europe, p<0.001). All these dramatic differences reflect the tremendously limited access to healthcare for migrants (particularly those undocumented) in Turkey.

In Greece, thanks to the new presidential decree of 5 June 2014, anyone living legally in Greece and without healthcare coverage can receive a free examination at a hospital. Nonetheless, this decree is not well known or not applied. Therefore, it is in France that enforcement MDM workers provide practical versions of the law and explain it to health professionals. They explain each patient’s case and then follow it up. Maria was able to have free examinations and delivery at the hospital in safe conditions. Nevertheless, as vaccines for dogs are sometimes not available at the hospital, her baby is still medically monitored and vaccinated by MDM services.

MDM Greece – Chania – September 2014

The story of Said, a 23-year-old from Turkey, demonstrates the misunderstanding by the medical staff of the new 2013 law giving access for undocumented migrants to healthcare “that cannot be deferred”. He tried to get an appointment for a doctor’s consultation but was given the information that a social security number is needed to book an appointment and that I needed to pay €80 for the visit. Then they told me that I could only get treatment if I was an asylum seeker and referred me to a hospital instead. Instead I told them what doctors at the World Swedish had told me: that the only condition was to pay €8. I then asked the staff if they knew about the new law and they did not.

MDM Sweden – Stockholm – October 2014

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTHCARE IN SEVEN EU COUNTRIES AND IN TURKEY (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Other countries</td>
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</table>

GIVING UP SEEKING HEALTHCARE

One patient in five (20.4%) said that they had given up trying to access healthcare or medical treatment in the course of the previous 12 months and up to 63.2% reported the same thing in Istanbul.

The frequency of people giving up seeking healthcare has significantly decreased in Spain since 2012: it was 52.0% in 2012, 22.0% in 2013 and 15.0% in 2014. The interpretation of this decrease is difficult since, unfortunately, the surveyed sites have changed over time (as well as the sample procedure from one year to another). However, it is useful to note that these figures do not represent the general situation of migrants in Spain, but should be taken as an indicator of those migrants who contact MDM. Since the Royal Decree 16/2012, the MDM team Spain has explored different channels for integrating migrants into the mainstream health services. Even though some regions are providing special programmes that enable certain rights for some undocumented migrants under certain circumstances, most health professionals and migrants coming to MDM do not know about them, as there has been no communication about these specific measures (such as in Valencia and the Canary Islands). Some of the patients interviewed in 2014 had already been to MDM before answering the questionnaire (and had thus already been informed about their rights), which explains the decreasing number of patients giving up seeking care.

DENIAL OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Denial of access to healthcare refers to any behaviour adopted voluntarily by a health professional that results, directly or indirectly, in failure to provide healthcare or medical treatment appropriate to the patient’s situation. Denial of access to healthcare “that cannot be deferred” included the four reasons mentioned above and which were reported or arrested (45.9%).

In Spain, denial of access to healthcare ranged from 32.7% to 43.1% among the seven sites (such as in Valencia and the Canary Islands). Some of the patients interviewed in 2014 had already been to MDM before answering the questionnaire (and had thus already been informed about their rights), which explains the decreasing number of patients giving up seeking care.

MDM Germany – Munich – December

Johan, a 74-year-old German man, explains: “When my partner died, I lost the house. I do not have my own place anymore. I sleep at my daughter’s mostly. I don’t want to ask them because the stress is too big. They didn’t have it easy, did all sorts of jobs, such as caretaker, looking after horses and working as a hairdresser. But I am old now and I can’t do this anymore. My mother and friends gave me the money. I don’t want to take it and I can’t afford to move out. I haven’t had health insurance for a couple of years now. I tried to make money as long as I could and then paid for my private health insurance. Sometimes I got robbers from the pharmacy for which you don’t need a prescription. I started to have heart problems and last week I had swollen legs. I went to hospital. Then I said to them I gave them the money. I could and then left immediately, with the urologist and surgeon still in me. I hope you can remove it. I’m not going back to that hospital.”

MDM Germany – Munich – December

Miriam was a 35-year-old Moroccan woman. Her husband, Ahmed, had worked in Spain from 1999 to 2007, undeclared for the first five years. When he returned home, Ahmed and Miriam unsuccessfully looked for work and finally moved to Belgium, where they also got undeclared jobs. Miriam was pregnant with her third child (a girl) in December (over the previous 12 months) was reported by 15.2% of patients seen by MDM in Europe. In Istanbul, 37% of the patients experienced this situation and a quarter in Spain.

**Table:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Other countries</td>
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**Notes:**

103. In 2014, proportions are not valid in Belgium and Switzerland: rates are less than 10% of people were asked this question and the response rate was particularly low in Greece, France and the UK. In these countries, this figure must be treated with great caution.

104. This point is not possible to make in Belgium and Switzerland: less than 10% of people were asked this question and the response rate was particularly low in France, France and the UK. Missing values: 35.0% in DE, 43.3% in FR, 0.0% in SE, 58.3% in IT, 9.6% in NL, 73.0% in SE, 62.9% in UK and 22.3% in IT.

106. For information purposes only: proportions not valid in Belgium and Switzerland: less than 10% of people were asked this question and the response rate was particularly low in France, France and the UK. Missing values: 35.0% in DE, 43.3% in FR, 0.0% in SE, 58.3% in IT, 9.6% in NL, 73.0% in SE, 62.9% in UK and 22.3% in IT.

MDM Belgium – Antwerp – December

After his wife’s death, Ahmed could not work and take care of his daughter on his own and Sonia was placed in an institution. She is now a foster family. Despite the MDM’s healthcare coverage, just despite the medical certificate, the registration at the CPAS still has not been completed until today. The last request to the CPAS was finally accepted at the end of 2014.
It is crucial to identify previous experiences of violence among migrant populations, in view of their frequency and impact on the mental and physical health of the victims even many years after the original episode—such as depression or post-traumatic stress disorders, risk of diagnostic errors when faced with unexplained physical disorders and the need for detection of sexually transmitted infections arising from sexual violence). This is why it is so important to listen attentively to accounts of previous experiences of violence, in the country of origin, during the migratory journey and in the host country. Unfortunately, stigmatisation of ‘foreigners’ remains one of the main obstacles to better patient care for people fleeing torture and political violence.

In 2014, 1,809 patients were interviewed about violence among them, 84.4% reported at least one violent experience in BE, CH, DE, EL, ES, FR, NL and UK (93.5% of women and 85.8% of men).

Patients from Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America were over-represented among the victims of violence but no origin was exempt from violence, including (obviously) EU citizens and nationals.

Experiences of violence affected both sexes and all ages. Asylum seekers were disproportionately highly represented among victims of violence (57.0% compared with 34.4% among all patients, p<0.001).

Fadel is a 17-year-old Cameroonian who left his country, while his sick mother, brothers and sisters stayed. He arrived in France three years after a violent migration journey. Fadel explains that he lived for over a year in the north of Morocco “hidden in the forest”. With other people seeking to make the Strait of Gibraltar crossing, he built a makeshift shelter. He was repeatedly “arrested and beat up by the Moroccan police”. Fadel said that his companions were not coming back after being arrested. One day, Fadel was arrested and badly beaten. He was sent to hospital where he was in a coma for a week. “When I woke up, I couldn’t remember anything; only the beatings by the police”. He tried again to cross the Strait and eventually managed to reach Spain, then France in June 2014.
**RACISM IN HEALTHCARE SERVICES**

Fortunately, only a few patients reported having been victims of racism in a healthcare facility. In Europe at least, approximately 4.5% of patients reported such an experience in the six countries where the question was asked. This proportion was the highest in Istanbul (38.7%) with a response rate of 77.5%.

**FEAR OF BEING ARRESTED**

Undocumented migrants and migrants with precarious residence status were asked if they limited their movements for fear of being arrested (at the time of the survey) as this also constitutes a well-known barrier in seeking access to healthcare.

In Europe, half of the interviewed patients (52.0%) reported such a limitation (either sometimes, frequently or very frequently). This proportion was particularly high in London (83.9%), the Netherlands (88.4%) and Istanbul (85.0%), where, as mentioned before, the fear of being reported or arrested was a frequently cited barrier in accessing healthcare. In Spain, this proportion was lower (57.5%).

**USEFULNESS OF HEALTHCARE**

In 2014, 1,809 patients were interviewed about violence. Among them, 84.4% reported at least one violent experience in Europe, comprising 75.7% of women and 85.5% of men.

Experiences of violence affected both sexes and all ages. Asylum seekers were disproportionately highly represented among victims of violence (57.6%) compared with 34.4% among all patients, (p<0.001).

**EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE**

It is crucial to identify previous experiences of violence among migrant populations, in view of their frequency and impact on the mental and physical health of the victims as well as their family and children. Even this limited access is not always guaranteed.

*Sofia, a 45-year-old woman from Morocco, was pregnant. Her husband was about to obtain the Spanish nationality, but she could not register under his husband’s healthcare coverage as they did not yet have a residence permit. Suffering from pain and bleeding, Sofia went to the emergency department of the maternity hospital in Malaga. According to her and the friend who accompanied her, the doctor said that without healthcare coverage she could not be attended. After two weeks her pain increased and she went back to the health centre. She was denied care “until her administrative situation gets solved.”*

She went to MdM a week later. With the intervention of MdM, the health centre “solved the case” and provided her with a health card. During the consultation, her general practitioner immediately referred her to the emergency department at the maternity hospital, which diagnosed her as having had a miscarriage that “should have been attended to a month earlier.” Sofia and her husband had filed a complaint in court. Although highly restrictive, the Royal decree provides access to care for pregnant women and children. Even this limited access is not always guaranteed.

MdM Spain – Malaga – January 2014

**GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE (IN THE EIGHT COUNTRIES SURVEYED IN N=)**

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

ASIA

EUROPE (NON EU)

MAGhREB

NATIONALS

AMERICAS

NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

EUROPEAN UNION

**REFERENCES**

107 Missing values: respectively, 34.0% in DE, 45.3% in EL, 6.0% in ES, 23.6% in NL, 16.6% in SE, 65.7% in UK

108 Due to other low numbers of respondents or high proportions of missing values, only Spanish, Dutch, UK and Turkish data may be considered representative.

109 Although it is not mandatory for individuals to share their identification papers with the police authorities, it is possible that many undocumneted migrants are not aware of this and feel their being asked “why” the number of people having reported such a limitation is not always guaranteed.


103 Varela R, Bodenmann P: Migration and violence. Swiss Med Wkly 2013; 143: 20-26

104 Collective: Gagner les victimes de torture en Europe (France, 2000; Paris, Centre Pierre Luce, May 2002) p. 9

105 Fadel UK. Experiences of violence in asylum seekers residing in MdM programmes and its influence on resettlement. This report will be published in the spring of 2015


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The types of violence most frequently reported in the eight European countries were:

- Living in a country at war (52.1%), physical threats, imprisonment or torture for one's ideas (43.3%) and violence perpetrated by the police or armed forces (39.1%);
- Beating or injury as a result of domestic or non-domestic violence (45.9%);
- Psychological violence (42.7%);
- Hunger (35.7%);
- Sexual assault (27.6%), reported by 37.6% of women (compared with 73% of men) and rape (14.9%), reported by 24.1% women and 5.4% of men. A quarter of the total numbers of sexual assaults reported were reported by male patients;
- Confiscation of money or documents (23.8%).

Among the respondents, 9.8% reported having experienced violence after having arrived in the countries surveyed. 21% of the reported rapes took place after the victim's arrival in the host country, as did 37% of sexual assaults, 37% of incidents of documents or money being confiscated, 19% of psychological violence and 40.8% of experiences of hunger.

The perceived health status of patients who reported at least one experience of violence was significantly worse in terms of general, mental and physical health (p < 0.001) than the perceived health of patients who did not report an episode of violence. Of these, 71.4% perceived their mental health to be very good or good versus only 33.5% among the people who reported an experience of violence.

12.4% of those who had experienced violence perceived their general health to be very bad versus 1.7% of the people who did not report an episode of violence. This confirms the major impact of the experience of violence on health and the medical duty to systematically ask patients about their past history of violence, in order to detect and provide adequate care and referrals.

VIOLENCE AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF MIGRATION IN THE 8 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (% OF REPORTED EPISODES)

- Have lived in a country at war
- Physically threatened, imprisoned or tortured for ideas
- Violence by police or armed forces
- Beaten up or injured (domestic or not)
- Sexually assaulted or molested
- Rape
- Psychological violence
- Money or documents confiscated
- Hunger
- Genital mutilations
- Other forms of violence

PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS ACCORDING TO REPORTED VIOLENCE (AMONG PATIENTS INTERVIEWED ABOUT EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE, IN %)

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Bad
- Very bad

0.0 20.0 40.0 60.0 80.0 100.0

Have lived in a country at war
Physically threatened, imprisoned or tortured for ideas
Violence by police or armed forces
Beaten up or injured (domestic or not)
Sexually assaulted or molested
Rape
Psychological violence
Money or documents confiscated
Hunger
Genital mutilations
Other forms of violence

© Giorgos MOUTAFIS
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### VIOLENCE BY GENDER (AMONG PATIENTS INTERVIEWED ON THIS SUBJECT IN EIGHT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Violent Episode</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Physical threats</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imprisoned or tortured</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Beaten up or injured (domestic or not)</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexually assaulted or molested</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Physical threats</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imprisoned or tortured</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beaten up or injured (domestic or not)</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexually assaulted or molested</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VIOLENCE AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF MIGRATION IN THE 8 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (% OF REPORTED EPISODES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Migration</th>
<th>Violent Episode</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
<td>Beaten up or injured</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical threats</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journey</td>
<td>Beaten up or injured</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical threats</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Host Country</td>
<td>Beaten up or injured</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical threats</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
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</table>

### PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS ACCORDING TO REPORTED VIOLENCE (AMONG PATIENTS INTERVIEWED ABOUT EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE, IN %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Violent Episode</th>
<th>No Violent Episode</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Bad</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Iranian Victim of Racist Attack: Three Men in Black in Athens Attacked Said One of Them bit His Ear Off. “In Europe, I didn’t see any civilization, I didn’t see any love” – Greece – 2014**
HEALTH STATUS

SELF-PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS

A majority (58.2%) of patients seen by MdM in Europe perceived their general health status as poor. However, 22.9% of patients perceived their physical health as bad or very bad, and this goes up to 27.9% for their mental health.

In Istanbul (and in this city alone), there was a very significant gap between physical and mental health status: physically only 5.8% of patients felt their health was bad (and none of them very bad) but 44.4% described their mental health as bad (and 2.9% very bad).

Comparing these data with those in the general population of the host countries – obtained from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey 2013 (latest year available) – MdM patients’ health status was worse than that of the general population in all countries, regardless of the age group considered, as well as in comparison with the 25-44 age group (close to the age distribution of the MdM patients). While these figures concern people going to MdM or ASEM clinics, most of whom, by definition, have a health issue, it is, however, not sufficient to explain the scale of the differences from the general population. Among MdM patients, 16.9% and 4.7% reported bad or very bad health respectively, compared with 2.2% and 0.5% of the 25-44-year-old adults in the general populations of these seven countries (in 2013).

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

Health professionals indicated, for each health problem (at each visit), whether it was a chronic or acute health condition; whether they thought treatment (or medical care) was necessary or only precautionary; whether the problem had been treated or monitored before the patient came to MdM, and whether, in their opinion, this problem should have been treated earlier.

More than half of the patients (55.3%) who consulted a doctor in the eight European centres were diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition. In Istanbul, 36.7% of patients seen had at least one chronic health condition.

Natalia is a 54-year-old Greek woman. She has been the owner of a shoe shop for six years. For the last three years, due to the economic crisis, she has been unable to pay the cost of her healthcare coverage. Natalia was diagnosed with hypertension two years ago, which requires adherence to a specific drug treatment routine. “I was able to cover the cost of the drugs for the first six months… as I couldn’t afford it anymore, I had to stop.”

Since she could not regularly take the medication, she had an episode of high blood pressure which took her to the emergency department. From there she was directed by the social services of the local hospital to MdM Polyclinic in Patras. Since then, Natalia has been treated at the MdM Polyclinic which covers the cost of medical texts and medication.

MdM Greece – Patras – October 2014

URGENT CARE AND NECESSARY TREATMENT

More than one third (36.5%) of patients needed urgent or fairly urgent care when they visited the seven European centres – and this figure was 100% for Istanbul.

In total, three out of four patients (74.5%) in the European programmes needed treatment that was deemed necessary by the doctor. This percentage was significantly higher in Switzerland (93.9% of patients needed at least one necessary treatment), Germany (84.3%), Spain (81.6%) and France (79.5%). In Istanbul, 100% of patients were in this situation.

PATIENTS HAD RECEIVED LITTLE HEALTHCARE BEFORE COMING TO MdM

In the nine European countries surveyed, 73.3% of patients had at least one health problem that had never been monitored or treated before coming to MdM. This percentage was significantly higher in Switzerland (79.7%), Germany (82.9%), France (76.9%), the Netherlands (65.3%) and London (63.1%) in Istanbul, almost all the patients were in this situation.

Altogether, 57.9% of the patients requiring treatment had not received care before coming to MdM. Thus for these patients MdM represents their first point of contact with a primary healthcare provider. This figure was also particularly high in Switzerland (74.4%), Germany (72.9%) and France (69.2%) and, above all, in Istanbul (98.9%).

Nearly half of the patients seen by a doctor at MdM (46.2%) had at least one chronic condition that had never been checked or monitored by a doctor before. This concerned half of the patients seen by a doctor in France, one in five patients seen in Spain, one third of patients seen in Istanbul and less than 10% of patients seen in Greece.

In other words, among the patients who suffered from one or several chronic conditions, 70.2% hadn’t received any medical follow-up before going to MdM (for at least one of their chronic health conditions). Except in Greece, where this situation was uncommon (9.2%), it affected at least one third of patients with a chronic health condition in Spain, 60% in the Netherlands, 68% in London and around three out of four patients in the four other countries.

In Istanbul, almost all patients with a chronic condition had not received care before coming to ASEM (93.7%).

HEALTH PROBLEMS LARGELY UNKNOWN PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN EUROPE

Only 9.5% of migrant patients had at least one chronic health problem which they had known about before they came to Europe (in CH, DE, ES, NL and UK).

Looking at the diagnoses in detail, very few of the patients may have migrated due to these chronic conditions, as the majority of the reported diagnoses are not life-threatening. In Istanbul, 37.1% of the patients were in this situation. This shows again how the idea of migration for health reasons is false: in Istanbul, foreign citizens must pay 100% of health costs.
A majority (58.2%) of patients seen by MdM in Europe perceived their general health status as poor. However, 22.9% of patients perceived their physical health as bad or very bad, and this goes up to 27.9% for their mental health.

In Istanbul (and in this city alone), there was a very significant gap between physical and mental health status: physically, only 5.8% of patients felt their health was bad (and none of them very bad but 41.4% described their mental health as bad (and 2.9% very bad)).

Comparing these data with those in the general population of the host countries — obtained from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey in 2013 (latest year available) — MdM patients’ health status was worse than that of the general population in all countries, regardless of the age group considered, as well as in comparison with the 25-44 age group (close to the age distribution of the MdM patients). While these figures concern people going to MdM or ASEM clinics, most of whom, by definition, have a health issue, it is, however, not sufficient to explain the scale of the differences from the general population. Among MdM patients, 16.9% and 4.7% reported bad or very bad health respectively, compared with 2.2% and 0.5% of the 25-44-year-old adults in the general populations of these seven countries (in 2013).

More than half of the patients (55.3%) who consulted a doctor in the eight European centres were diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition. In Istanbul, 36.7% of patients seen had at least one chronic health condition.

Health professionals indicated, for each health problem (at each visit), whether it was a chronic or acute health condition, whether they thought treatment (or medical care) was necessary or only precautionary, whether the problem had been treated or monitored before the patient came to MdM, and whether, in their opinion, this problem should have been treated earlier.

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HEALTH PROBLEMS BY ORGAN SYSTEM

Half of the health issues encountered correspond to four of the body’s organ systems: the digestive system accounted for 14.4% of all diagnoses, musculoskeletal 13.3%, respiratory 10.0% and cardiovascular 9.6%.

When health problems were grouped under broad disease categories, psychological problems were identified in 10.6% of medical consultations. The most frequently reported mental health problems were anxiety (3.8%) and depression (3.4%). When health problems were grouped under broad cultural conditions, psychological problems were identified in 10.6% of medical consultations. The most frequently reported mental health problems were anxiety (3.8%) and depression (3.4%).

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When health problems were grouped under broad disease categories, psychological problems were identified in 10.6% of medical consultations. The most frequently reported mental health problems were anxiety, stress and psychosomatic problems (5.8% of consultations) and depression (2.9% of consultations). Obviously psychological disorders were much rarer (0.5%). Problems related to using psychoactive substances were almost non-existent (0.4%).

Overall, 10% of medical consultations for women patients dealt with gynaecological problems: normal pregnancy and postnatal care (10.0%) and contraception (0.3%).

Gynaecological problems were identified in 10.6% of medical consultations. The most frequently diagnosed gynaecological problem was menstrual disorders (4.2%) and contraception (5.2%), menstruation problems being the most common problem.

When patients were asked about the treatment they had received when they had consulted a doctor, 41.3% of patients reported they had been prescribed some medicine or other, and 25.3% had been referred to a specialist. Patients who were referred to specialists were more likely to report some treatment or other (35.7%) than patients who had not been referred (20.9%).

The testimonies shared by Trenton, a 26-year-old Ugandan man, illustrates how violence, discrimination and social isolation can build up into a vicious circle of vulnerabilities, with a serious impact on health and particularly mental health. "I was born in Uganda. I grew up in a tough situation. I didn’t have parents to look after me, so I had to grow up on my own. My family was very poor and we couldn’t talk to each other. I don’t know what was happening to me, what was going on around me. I started developing illnesses. I started suffering headaches and unusual pains. I had no one to talk to. When I started feeling sick and feeling pain inside me there was nothing I could do about it. I had to continue hiding my feelings. I was so down and confused and just worried all the time. I had no interest in anything; no interest in life as a whole."

Trenton was directed to the MMD UK clinic by a friend. He relates his first contact: "That was a life-changing moment for me. I wrote my name down and I sat down and I waited patiently. The kind of care and service I got when the doctor attended to me is something that I’d never even experienced in my life. They took good care of me and we were so loved and kind. I was so grateful. I immediately connected with them and connected with the doctor."

On his arrival Trenton had had a GP. "But I had been told that without visa status you are not allowed to access a GP. I was scared to even visit my GP again. But MMD-UK assured me and said, ‘Everyone is entitled to medical care no matter what their visa status is’. The MMD volunteer immediately started searching for all the GPs in the area. She asked whether I had been registered at their practices. I’d never forget that day. They arranged an appointment for me and everything was started for me before I left the clinic. I was referred to two different social groups as well as counselling. I walked out of the clinic that day a very happy person. For once I was excited because I knew that at least I had someone to talk to. Sometimes all we need is someone who we can confide in and talk to.”

Trenton was diagnosed with severe depression. "The doctor also ensured that I had a social group to attend to help me to have a safe place where I could meet people like me to talk about our experiences and open up to each other. I felt better; I was healing because I was receiving medication that I was taking on a daily basis. The social groups helped me build my confidence and I was even referred to an immunisation solicitor. My solicitor booked me an appointment at the immigration office in Croydon. I was detained there because I didn’t have valid documents. Although I’d taken my medication in the morning, the following day I wasn’t able to take it and didn’t know who to talk to in the detention centre. I kept mentioning it to the officers and I kept telling them, ‘I need my medication’. It is a 30-day treatment and you cannot skip a day.”

Trenton explains that he kept in contact with MMD UK and the GP so that he could get medication on a daily basis. "Staying in the detention centre was tough. It is hard to live in an environment where you see so many people who are stressed. So many people who are depressed. People are crying, people are ill and to be in such a place takes toughness, courage and support – a lot of support. The medication I was taking in the detention centre was strong and would make me drowsy. But I was also strong because I knew I had the support. Not everyone in the detention centre was as fortunate as me.” (Trenton means the support from MMD-UK GP)

"Not everyone was able to get information about what was happening around them. Some people didn’t even know what was going on in the world. Some of them were so sick that they were crying. Some of them were so stressed that they were feeling so many people crying, day in, day out. I believe more has got to be done about healthcare within the detention centre. After leaving the detention centre I was granted refugee status. I am now free to live. I have the freedom to be who I am without any fear because I’m in a free land now. It gives me some sort of peace on the inside to know I can walk around the streets without caring about who is around me and without a constant fear that someone is painting a finger at me. I am totally free and I’m so grateful for the clinic and the work it does with so many people. There are so many people in the country with no GP. Now that I’m a free man I have plans for the future. I had always dreamed of an IT career but when your health is not good it affects everything that you aspire to. But I believe that now it is my time to shine. I’m looking forward to starting work and I’m looking forward to having a place of my own.”

MMD UK – London – September 2014
CONCLUSION

European stakeholders increasingly recognise the impacts that the economic crisis and austerity measures have had on the accessibility of national healthcare services. In 2014, following repeated calls by NGOs and the European Parliament, both the Commission and the Council have reaffirmed their adherence to the values of universality, access to quality care, equity and solidarity.

> MdM urges Member States and EU institutions to ensure universal public health systems built on solidarity, equality and equity, open to everyone living in an EU Member State.

The international and European institutions that have asked national governments to ensure protection for people and groups facing multiple vulnerabilities are legion. The data collected by MdM over the past year clearly show that the crisis and austerity policies are still having negative consequences on people’s health. In addition, as the Council notes, “the scale of effects on health of the economic crisis and the reduction in public health expenditures may only become apparent in the following years”.

The data in this report also show how the declarations of intent that Member States formulated at the level of the Council of the European Union (“The Council acknowledges that universal access to healthcare is of paramount importance in addressing health inequalities”) have not been accompanied by any real improvements in access to healthcare for groups which already face multiple vulnerabilities, such as undocumented third-country nationals, constitute EU citizens and groups facing social stigma.

The right of children to health and care is one of the most basic, most universal and most essential human rights. The Board highlights that, in regard to the most basic human rights of children residing in Europe, there is still an evident disparity in accessibility to sexual and reproductive health services, in the quality of care and in clinical outcomes across Member States that are following the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which considered that a migrant living, for example, with HIV, “should never be expelled when it is clear that he or she will not receive adequate healthcare and assistance in the country to which he or she is being sent back”.

> All children residing in Europe must have full access to national immunisation schemes and to paediatric care. All pregnant women must have access to termination of pregnancy, antenatal and postnatal care and safe delivery.

DECONSTRUCTING THE MYTHS...

Institutions such as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) play a key role in deconstructing the myths some policy-makers may still use to gain public support for austerity policies. In an assessment report of how infectious diseases affect migrant populations in Europe, the ECDC warns that, “poor access to healthcare is an important proximal risk factor for poorer health outcomes” and that more needs to be done to ensure equal access to healthcare for migrants, especially for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants.

> National governments should ensure that coherent and inclusive infectious disease policies are in place that allow access to prevention, care and treatment for anyone residing in Europe.

A small number of migrants become seriously ill after arriving in Europe (e.g. living with HIV, having mental health problems or suffering from renal failure, cancer, hepatitis, etc.) and for them going back to their home country is not an option because they are not able to effectively access healthcare there. European national governments could achieve a quick win in terms of human rights by protecting this small group. The Member States who have done so have not seen any significant rise in the number of seriously ill migrants seeking protection. In doing so, these States are following the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which considered that a migrant living, for example, with HIV, “should never be expelled when it is clear that he or she will not receive adequate healthcare and assistance in the country to which he or she is being sent back”.

> MdM urges Member States and EU institutions to ensure universal public health systems built on solidarity, equality and equity, open to everyone living in an EU Member State.

The economic and societal impact of such inequitable access shows the “compelling need to improve delivery of care”. EBCOG recommends that “local protocols should be developed to support equal access to healthcare needs for all vulnerable groups including the migrant population and those who do not speak the host country’s language”.

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HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In 2014, the European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (EBCOG) presented the Standards of Care developed by its members from 36 European countries, regarding obstetric, neonatal and gynaecology services. The Board highlights that, “there is still an evident disparity in accessibility and reproductive health services, in the quality of care and in clinical outcomes across the countries and even in regions within the same country.”

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In April 2014, the European Public Health Association (EUPHA), the Andalusian School of Public Health and the Consortium for Healthcare and Social Services of Catalonia launched the Granada Declaration. It states that, “when many European countries are implementing austerity policies, it is especially important that the public health community should speak out on behalf of the poor and marginalized. Among them are many migrants, who for various reasons are especially vulnerable at this time.”

The declaration calls for better protection of migrants’ health and healthcare, specifically including that of undocumented migrants. Almost 100 European and national institutions, professional associations and civil society organisations have endorsed the document. This shows how many health professionals are demanding to be able to work according to their medical ethics.

> "In accordance with the World Medical Association’s Declaration on the Rights of the Patient, MdM will continue to provide appropriate medical care to all people without discrimination. MdM refuses all restrictive legal measures to alter medical ethics and exhorts all health professionals to take care of all patients regardless of their administrative status and the existing legal barriers."
CONCLUSION

European stakeholders increasingly recognise the impacts that the economic crisis and austerity measures have had on the accessibility of national healthcare services. In 2014, following repeated calls by NGOs and the European Parliament, both the Commission and the Council have reaffirmed their adherence to the values of universal access to good quality care, equity and solidarity.

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The international and European institutions that have asked national governments to ensure protection for people and groups facing multiple vulnerabilities are legion. The data collected by MDM over the past year clearly show that the crisis and austerity policies are still having negative consequences on people’s health. In addition, as the Council notes, “the scale of effects on health of the economic crisis and the reduction in public health expenditures may only become apparent in the following years”.

In 2014, following repeated calls by NGOs and the international and European institutions that have asked, the European Parliament passed several resolutions calling for the universal access to healthcare. Among them were the resolution of 4 July 2013 on the impact of the crisis on access to care, the resolution of 13 March 2014 on the Employment and social aspects of the role and operations of the Troika with regard to euro area programme countries, the resolution of 4 February 2014 on undocumented women migrants in the European Union, and the resolution of 2014/2007(INI) on the fundamental rights of children and the many vulnerable groups of people left behind by austerity policies, such as undocumented third-country nationals, destitute EU citizens and groups facing social stigma.

The right of children to health and care is one of the most basic, most universal and most essential human rights. However, while it holds its Fundamental Rights Charter that universal access to healthcare is of paramount importance, the Council acknowledges that universal access to healthcare is of paramount importance in addressing health inequalities. It has not been accompanied by any real improvements in access to healthcare for groups which already face multiple vulnerabilities, such as undocumented third-country nationals, destitute EU citizens and groups facing social stigma.

In 2014, MDM urges the European Union to develop the necessary mechanisms to transform its immunisation and public health policies into more effective, comprehensive, accessible policies that will ensure that no child is left behind. MdM urges the European Union to ensure equal access to healthcare for migrants, especially for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. The Board highlights that, “in the face of the complex challenges we face today, it is especially important that the public health community should speak out on behalf of the poor and marginalised. Among them are many migrants, who for various reasons are especially vulnerable at this time.”

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DECONSTRUCTING THE MYTHS...

Institutions such as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) play a key role in deconstructing the myths some policy-makers may still spread against migrants or ethnic minorities as an excuse for not putting equitable public health first. In their assessment report of how infectious diseases affect migrant populations in Europe, the ECDC warns that, “poor access to healthcare is an important proximal risk factor for poorer health outcomes” and that more needs to be done to ensure equal access to healthcare for migrants, especially for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. National governments should ensure that coherent and inclusive infectious disease policies are in place that allow access to prevention, care and treatment for anyone residing in Europe.

A small number of migrants become seriously ill after arriving in Europe, e.g., living with HIV, having mental health problems, or suffering from renal failure, cancer, hepatitis, etc. and for them going back to their home country is not an option because they are not able to effectively access healthcare there. European national governments could achieve a quick win in terms of human rights by protecting this small group. The Member States who have done so have not seen any significant rise in the number of seriously ill migrants seeking protection. In doing so, these States are following the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which considered that a migrant living, for example, with HIV, “should never be expelled when it is clear that he or she will not receive adequate healthcare and assistance in the country to which he or she is being sent back”.

Expulsions with no assurance of adequate healthcare may be tantamount to a death penalty, which goes against the position of the EU and all EU Member States on “strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all times and in all circumstances”.

When seriously ill migrants are expelled to a country where they will not get adequate healthcare, they face extremely serious consequences for their health, including the possibility of death. This must be avoided at all costs by protecting them in Europe and by giving them access to care.

→ Seriously ill migrants must be protected from expulsion when effective access to adequate healthcare cannot be ensured in the country to which they are expelled.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost we would like to thank the 23,040 patients who answered our questions for the time and effort they gave us to talk about their often painful lives, despite the social and health problems they were facing at the time we met them. This work received support from the Ministry of Health (France), the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM) - a collaborative initiative of the Network of European Foundations (NEF) - as well as funding under an operating grant from the European Union’s Health Programme (2014-2020).

The content of this report represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the positions of the NEF, EPIM or partner foundations and its Health and Food Safety or the views of the European Commission and/or the European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

REFERENCE FOR QUOTATIONS:


ACRONYMS

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REFERENCE FOR QUOTATIONS:

HOW LONG WILL THEY REMAIN WITH NO OTHER PROSPECT BUT WALLS? CALAIS – FRANCE – 2014

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