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
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. 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 23,240 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 expulsion and ditches and slums in fear of expulsion. They have in common with destitute people the right to care actually contribute to making people sicker. As in previous years, 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 5.6 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 exourts all health professionals to provide care to all patients.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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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 care needs, Europe's borders have not been sealed and significant numbers of migrants have gained access to the continent. As 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 an average of 6 years 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.

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The 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 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)
- 81.1% 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:**

- 63% 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

**BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTHCARE**

- 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 (54.1%).
- 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.

**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

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- 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
- 43.4% 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
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE 2014 SURVEY

12. METHODS

13. FOCUS ON PREGNANT WOMEN

18. FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD VACCINATION

22. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

25. LENGTH OF STAY BY FOREIGN NATIONALS IN THE SURVEY COUNTRY

28. ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION

30. LIVING CONDITIONS

31. SOCIAL ISOLATION

32. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

32. COVERAGE OF HEALTHCARE CHARGES

34. BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

35. GIVING UP SEEKING HEALTHCARE

36. DENIAL OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

36. RACISM IN HEALTHCARE SERVICES

36. FEARS OF BEING ARRESTED

37. EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

40. HEALTH STATUS

40. SELF-PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS

40. CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

41. URGENT CARE AND ESSENTIAL TREATMENT

41. PATIENTS WHO HAD RECEIVED LITTLE HEALTHCARE BEFORE COMING TO MDM

41. HEALTH PROBLEMS LARGELY UNKNOWN PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN EUROPE

42. HEALTH PROBLEMS BY ORGAN SYSTEM

44. CONCLUSION

47. ACRONYMS

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2014 SURVEY

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. Hence, 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.

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 (23.1% of the total population). More than 27% of the total population lives in overcrowded households, 25.6% 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 28.8% in December 2014 in 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 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”.

OECD Health at a glance 2014

OECD Focus on inequality and growth


6. In 2012, only 20,000 pensioners (3% of unemployeds) could benefit from the long-term unemployment assistance scheme to the basic income threshold. Mouzoukis (D) et al. Facing during the social impact of the crisis in Greece. OECD Employment Department. 9 January 2014, p. 36.

7. Eurostat. Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination, by sex, age and reason. 2015.

8. OECD. 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.

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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 diacetylmorphine (heroin) 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-birthweight babies by more than 16% between 2008 and 2012, which has long-term implications for child health and development. Obstetricians have reported a 32% rise in stillbirths in Greece between 2008 and 2012, while fewer pregnant women have access to antenatal care services.

MIGRANTS IN DANGER AT EUROPE’S BORDERS

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the number of international 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 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 South 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 to 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.

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 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 76 million were internally displaced. Syria is the largest crisis of the 28 Member States of the EU, to 626,820 in 2014, also been a gradual increase in the number of asylum applications in the EU, to 626,820 in 2014. 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.

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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 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 76 million were internally displaced. Syria is the largest crisis of the 28 Member States of the EU, to 626,820 in 2014, also been a gradual increase in the number of asylum applications in the EU, to 626,820 in 2014. 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 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 diacetylmorphine (heroin) 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-birthweight babies by more than 16% between 2008 and 2012, which has long-term implications for child health and development. Obstetricians have reported a 32% rise in stillbirths in Greece between 2008 and 2012, while fewer pregnant women have access to antenatal care services.

MIGRANTS IN DANGER AT EUROPE’S BORDERS

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the number of international 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 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.

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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 76 million were internally displaced. Syrians were the largest group of asylum seekers in 2014. UNHCR estimated that around 3,400 people have died or have gone missing at sea (data as of November 2014).

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GREECE: According to the Constitution of 5 June 2014, access to healthcare for individuals without healthcare coverage will be regulated once the legal residence status is granted under certain conditions. People entitled to free medical care in hospitals including uninsured Greek people; EU citizens or people from outside the EU who live permanently and legally in Greece, have no medical coverage through a private or public 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 to be 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 a large 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. Migrants seeking leave to enter the country for more than six months will have to pay an immigration health charge. The healthcare rights of new EU citizens and people with long-term residence in the EU will no longer be limited to acute cases where the individual will be in need of emergency care. It is expected that the healthcare costs, among other things

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

There is an impressive range of international texts and commitment measures 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 published by its institutions and agencies. Below the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) noted that, “there is no legal instrument, or even consensus, with regard to the processing of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, as well as the use of bone age tests to determine their age.” Concerning migrant children, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) noted that, “there is no legal instrument, or even consensus, with regard to the processing of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, as well as the use of bone age tests to determine their age.” Concerning migrant children, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) noted that, “there is no legal instrument, or even consensus, with regard to the processing of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, as well as the use of bone age tests to determine their age.” Concerning migrant children, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) noted that, “there is no legal instrument, or even consensus, with regard to the processing of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, as well as the use 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GERMANY: In March 2015, the German Federal government modified the law on the National Health and Welfare (Sozialgesetzes) to found that the terms ‘not be deferred’, including medical examination and medicine covered by the Pharmaceutical Act, can no longer be applied in practice by many CPAS. 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 Urgent) 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 CPAS.

FRANCE: Following the French President’s political commitments, from 1 July 2013 onwards, the thresholds for the complementary Universal Medical Coverage (Couvèrte Médecine Universelle complémentaire – CMU) and hence the coverage acquisition have been reduced by 8.3% (see annex). In May 2015, new burial figures, 539,307 additional people were covered thanks to this positive measure (not including people covered by the specific healthcare coverage for undocumented migrants, State Medical Aid (Aide Médicale de l’Etat – 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 intent of this measure is expected by the end of 2015.

GREECE: According to the Common Ministerial Decree of 5 June 2014, access to healthcare for individuals without healthcare coverage who are 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.

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THE MDM INTERNATIONAL NETWORK’S DOMESTIC PROGRAMMES

Since 1980, the international aid organisation Doctors of the World – Médicins du monde (MDM) has been working for a world where trai-
ners to health have been overcome and where the right to health is recog- onised and effective – both at home and abroad. The work of MDM mainly relies upon the commitment of volunteers. Working on 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. 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, undocu- mented 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-support groups as a way of stren-thening civil society and recognising experience-based expertise.

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In spite of the growing awareness and literature on health inequalities, the populations are disconnected through health 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 analysis, 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, interactional and contextual dimensions of vulnerabilities. For in- stance, some population groups are being made vulnerable due to res- trictive laws. Furthermore, everyone is likely to be vulnerable at some point in their life. Fixed and mobile interventions demand have combined effects. On the other hand, although health is largely de jure determined by people confronted with multiple vulnerability factors and by the health professionals working with them. 58

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.mdmnetwork.wordpress.com 59

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 programmes range from mobile services (through the use of the questionnaires to guide the social and medical consultations) 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.mdmnetwork.wordpress.com

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-support groups as a way of stren-thening 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.

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 regards to accessing healthcare. Ultimately, these programmes aim to help patients re-integrate into the mainstream healthcare system, where it is legally possible.

MDM programmes are run by volunteers and employees consisting of health profession- als – 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 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:

MDM in 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 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 and patient rights are required to be respected, mild forms of illegalisation (e.g. the sanction of breaches of the country’s social security norms) or even severe forms of illegalisation (e.g. the sanction of breaches of the country’s criminal norms) are used against the patient. Access to healthcare coverage depends upon having work and a residential address. Undocumented migrants have no healthcare coverage and only have access to emergency services. More and more hospitals require a deposit from people who don’t present a healthcare entitlement card. For the interviewees, the following three most frequent barriers were no or only a low income, the patient’s health status and the patient’s legal status. 60

OPENING OF MDM LUXEMBOURG AND FIRST INFORMATION ON BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE

In January 2015, 11 new organisations joined the MDM International Network to form the Euro- pean Network. The ten newly joined organisations were given the opportu- nity to carry out an assessment of the healthcare situation in their respective country. The main objective of this assessment was to provide information on barriers to healthcare coverage in order to be able to design and carry out interventions that might improve the situation. The first intervention was launched by MDM Luxembourg.

In March 2014, MDM Luxembourg opened the ‘Clinic in Luxembourg’, a medical and social advice point in cooperation with the clarification centre in the city of Luxembourg. The main objective of this team was to provide information on barriers to healthcare coverage in order to be able to design and carry out interventions that might improve the situation. The first intervention was launched by MDM Luxembourg.

The MDM Luxembourg’s team was made up of a doctor in internal and emergency care, a midwife, a legal adviser, a social worker and a medical technician. The clinic offered a range of healthcare related services and social advice. The clinic aimed to provide people in Luxembourg with information on barriers to healthcare coverage in order to be able to design and carry out interventions that might improve the situation. The first intervention was launched by MDM Luxembourg.
Since 1980, the international aid organisation Doctors of the World – Médecins du monde (MdM) has been working for a world where trau- 
matic harm to health have been overcome and where the right to health is recognised and effective – both at home and abroad. The work of MdM mainly revolves around the commitment of volunteers. Working on 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. 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 programs 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 of migrants as a way of stren- 
gthening 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.

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 analysis, 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, intertectural and contextual dimensions of vulnerabilities. For ex- ample, some population groups are being made vulnerable due to re- strictive laws. Furthermore, everyone is likely to be vulnerable at some point in the future. Fixed and mobile interventions are a way of com- bining factors. 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 people who attended MdM health centres through 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.

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. The programmes address people who face barriers to 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:

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 re-integrate into the mainstream healthcare system, where it is legally possible. MdM programmes

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

PROGRAMMES INVOLVED IN THE SURVEY AND SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>COUNTRY CODE</th>
<th>SITES PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY</th>
<th>PROGRAMMES IN 2014 IN ADDITION TO FREELY ACCESSIBLE FRONTLINE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE CONSULTATIONS AS WELL AS SOCIAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Antwerp, Brussels</td>
<td>In addition to social and medical services, provision of psychological support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| CH      | Switzerland  | La Chaux de Fonds               | Nurse-led consultations in asylum seeker centres (in the centre of Neuchâtel) and nurse consul- 
tation and social advice in the La Chaux de Fonds - regularly invited 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, Mistelini, Thessaloniki | In addition to social and medical services, provision of psychological support and specialist consultations in Mithilaf, consultation are provided in reception centres for migrants who ar-
ned by sea. |
| ES      | Spain        | Torero, Bilbao, Zaragoza, Seville, Valencia, Malaga, 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, Nantes, Nice        | Tailored social and medical facilities to respond to the needs of groups who cannot access health-care. Specialist consultations including psychiatry, referral to mainstream healthcare system. |
| NL      | Netherlands  | Amsterdam, the Hague            | Provision of advice and support to undocumented migrants from outside the EU for their inte-
gration into the regular health system. Additionally over the counter medication (but no me-
dical consultation), empowerment of migrant groups and awareness-raising of health profes-
sionals in the public system. |
| 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 ASNM (The Association for solidarity and support for mi-
grouns 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 little cost. ASNM has deve-
loped a strong link with West African communities. |
| UK      | United Kingdom | London                        | The clinic in East London only 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 communications 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 barriers encountered. The overall majority of patients were men and the majority of patients were from the Mediterranean and North African countries. The most common health problems were skin infections, respiratory infections and chronic conditions. Most patients did not present a health insurance policy, and many patients did not know how to register in the public benefits system. Many patients had no access to medical and dental consultations).

15 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 barriers to access healthcare and the health status of its service users and publish the results. This led to the creation in 2005 of the Observatory of Access to Healthcare in France.

16 Throughout this document, countries are ranked alphabetically order by their official international code, according to European recommendations (International Singe Guide, EU, Rev Ju / 13/2002).
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).

MAPPING OF THE SITES SURVEYED IN 2014

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.

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 16 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.

REASONS FOR CONSULTING MDM PROGRAMMES

The vast majority of patients consulted MDM programmes to obtain medical care (81% 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).

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FOCUS ON PREGNANT WOMEN

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ADMINISTRATIVE STATUS OF THE PREGNANT WOMEN INTERVIEWED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% in Europe (n=235)</th>
<th>% in Istanbul (n=61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen of non-EU country without permission to reside</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU citizen with no permission to reside</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total without permission to reside</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Samira was a 22-year-old Congolese woman who lived in Turkey for three years. When she arrived at Esiksehir public health hospital, she was six months pregnant and felt unwell. She was referred to Osmangazi hospital, where €3.500 was requested from her, as her residence permit (and health insurance) had expired the day before. As she was not able to pay she was sent back home.

Three days later, she managed to have her residence permit renewed and immediately went back to Osmangazi hospital. In the meantime her baby had died in the womb and she died the same day, leaving two daughters with their father.

ASEM Turkey – Istanbul – January 2015

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 10 times less of the latter.

63 The number of people being on the financial resources of the respondent was not asked. If they were excluded the percentage of people living below the poverty line would be much higher and they actually represented all the patients seen by MDH.
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 74.1% 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 47.5% were living apart from one or more of their minor children. Nearly half of them (47.5%) were living apart from one or more of their minor children.

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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 (98.7%). In addition, in Germany 75.9% 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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"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:

- Sexual 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?

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>% in Europe (N=310)</th>
<th>% in Istanbul (N=96)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No preparation before the delivery</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No early detection of anemia and diabetes</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-eclampsia goes unnoticed</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preparation before the delivery</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No explanation about breast feeding</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No family planning</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

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 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
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 one or more of their minor children. 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. In most countries this means that they have to pay for their 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 centers and, of those, 58.2% received care too late – that is after the 12th week of pregnancy.

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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 one or more of their minor children. 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.

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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 only possible in hospitals and is free of charge.

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.

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.

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 term 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.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

When considering the emotional dimension of these cases, it must be stated that the right to health is not only about physical health but also about mental and emotional health. The right to health includes the right to access mental healthcare services, which can provide support in dealing with the emotional impact of pregnancy. Legal uncertainties and the fear of deportation can cause significant psychological distress for women seeking care. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that undocumented women have access to mental health services as part of their reproductive health care.

At the end of 2013 the Spanish government proposed to repeal the 2000 law on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary interruption of pregnancy, thereby revoking 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.

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 and emergency contraception, and for safe 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.”

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FRANCE: Undocumented pregnant women can gain access to the 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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The women’s 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 access to a doctor. The situation is unclear for undocumented pregnant women with no health card.

SWEDEN: Adult asylum seekers and undocumented migrants outside the EU have access to healthcare and dental care that “cannot be deferred”. They have access to maternity care and termination of pregnancy. They have to pay a fee of around €45 for every visit to a doctor. The situation is unclear for pregnant EU nationals who have lost the right to reside in Sweden.

SWITZERLAND: Undocumented pregnant women who 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.

UNDOCUMENTED pregnant women have to pay their health expenses for the first six months of pregnancy, antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care periods. It seems that two years after the adoption of this new law, many health centres are still not implementing it, through lack of knowledge or will, leaving pregnant women with no health care.

At the end of 2013 the Spanish government proposed to repeal the 2001 law on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary interruption of pregnancy, thereby allowing 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).

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MOBILISATION FOR WOMEN’S RIGHT TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES IF AND WHEN THEY HAVE A CHILD

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

MdM participation in the European mobilisation against the Spanish anti-abortion law – Paris – France – February 2014

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Mobilisation for women’s right to decide for themselves if and when they have a child...
**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 included the vaccine against Hepatitis B in their national immunisation schedules7.

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 rates need 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%6.

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 (57.1%) seen by MdM teams had not been vaccinated against tetanus and about 60% to 65% were not protected from whooping cough or MMR.

**KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE TO GO FOR VACCINATIONS**

In total, 38.6% 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.

**KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE TO GO FOR VACCINATIONS (FOR MINORS, %)**

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7. The rates 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.

71. This means that MdM doctors or nurses had seen the vaccination booklet.

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74. Summary of WHO Position Papers - Recommendations for Routine Immunization (updated 30 May 2014).

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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 rates need 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.

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The vaccine against Hepatitis B (HBV) was not enough. 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%.

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) 95% in the general population.

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In total, 38.9% 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.

In 2014, 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%.
As vaccination and health cards are requested for registration at state schools, not accessing healthcare can be a problem for children of undocumented migrants. Indeed, the municipality has recently introduced new legislation limiting undocumented migrant registration. Although her first child was registered and Mariea 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, impeded obtaining a health card from the health centre.

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 AME 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 health care facilities and preventative care through the Birth and Childhood Office or Child and Family health centre but they need to be registered in the civil registry. Otherwise, Unaccompanied minors do not have any specific protection, their access to healthcare depends on their residence status.

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.

SWEDEN: The July 2013 law grants full access to healthcare to children of undocumented migrants under 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.
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 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 show his health card. In the public health centre, they told me that he is not allowed to get one as he is not registered with the Municipality.*

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.

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**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. In Belgium, the children of undocumented migrants have free access to vaccinations and preventative care through the Bith 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 AMV 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 healthcare 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 care (0-4 years). Children of asylum seekers come under the same specific scheme as 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 of Law 16/2003 (added by Article 1º 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.

**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 €90 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 €45 added to the €45 medical consultation costs. Unaccompanied minors waiting for a decision on international protection can 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.

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76 The full legislative report on access to healthcare in 12 countries published in May 2015, is available at www.mdmeuroblog.wordpress.com


78 Royal Decree Act 14/2012
In total, 43% of the patients seen in Europe were women (34.3% in Istanbul). The average age of the patients seen by MdM in Europe was 35.8 (30.8 in Istanbul) and half of the patients were between 25 and 46 (26 and 36 in Istanbul).

Overall, 645 minors were received at MdM clinics, amounting to 4% of all patients (up to 5% in Belgium and France, 16% in Switzerland and 14% in Greece).

In France, the number of unaccompanied minor migrants also increased, with the majority converging towards the Parisian area (Paris and Saint-Denis). Indeed, the number of unaccompanied minors visiting MdM in and around Paris tripled in 2014, with most children not having any healthcare coverage and half being homeless at their first encounter with MdM. Psychological issues were very common for most of these children, indicating the need for adequate psychosocial and medical support.

Although there are few comprehensive data on the total number of unaccompanied children present in Europe or arriving each year, significant numbers of unaccompanied children present in Europe or arriving each year, significant numbers of unaccompanied minors visiting MdM in and around Paris tripled in 2014, with most children not having any healthcare coverage and half being homeless at their first encounter with MdM. Psychological issues were very common for most of these children, indicating the need for adequate psychosocial and medical support.

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

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 at the French Immigration and Integration Office (OFII). Their request to be taken into the Centre for Asylum Seekers (CADA) failed. 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 took them in.

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### Demographic Characteristics

#### Sex and Age

In total, 43% of the patients seen in Europe were women (34.3% in Istanbul). The average age of the patients seen by MDM in Europe was 35.8 (30.8 in Istanbul) and half of the patients were between 25 and 46 (26 and 36 in Istanbul).

Overall, 645 minors were received at MDM clinics, amounting to 4% of all patients (up to 5% in Belgium and France, 16% in Switzerland and 14% in Greece).

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Although there are few comprehensive data on the total number of unaccompanied children present in Europe or arriving each year, significant numbers of unaccompanied minors have arrived in Europe since 2008 (the most reliable statistics are those provided by the MdM Delegation Ile de France). In view of the increased need for support, a question was added to the 2015 survey to better comprehend the number of unaccompanied minors and their access to healthcare. This issue will be further documented in next year’s report.

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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. MDG alerted the DDCS again and received the same answer that there was no budget. MDG 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.

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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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 (2012/2081(INI)).

82. Missing values: respectively 1.5% in BE, 0.3% in CH, 1% in DE, 2.2% in EL, 0.5% in ES, 1.5% in FR, 3.3% in NL, 1% in SE, 9.0% in UK, and 2.0% in TR.
In the nine European countries, patients mostly originated from sub-Saharan Africa (29.0%), followed by the European Union (15.6%), Asia (11.6%), Maghreb (11.4%), Near and Middle East (9.3%) and the Americas (essentially Latin America: 8.9%).

Nationalities represent 6.4% and the total of nationals and foreign EU citizens amounts to 22%.

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=0.35 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

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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—(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.

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

84 Economic reasons correspond to the question: ‘Why did you leave your country? For economic reasons, to earn a living, because had no perspectives/no way to earn a living in home country’.

85 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.

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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=0.356 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.

### Length of Stay in the Country by Foreign Nationals

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### Top Ten Most Frequently Recorded Nationalities, by Country

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### Reasons for Migration (%)

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Unable to earn a living in home country</th>
<th>Political, religious, ethnic, sexual orientation</th>
<th>To escape from war</th>
<th>To join or follow someone</th>
<th>Family conflicts</th>
<th>To ensure your children’s future</th>
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<td>14.6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Multiple responses were possible: in France the question was not asked and in Belgium the response rate was too low.
“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 (81.8%) and family reasons (to join or follow someone: 22.2%) 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS FOR MIGRATION: COMPARISON BETWEEN EU CITIZENS (EXCEPT NATIONALS) AND OTHER MIGRANTS (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU CITIZENS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic reasons, unable to earn a living in home country</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political, religious, ethnic, sexual orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>To escape from war</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Family conflicts</td>
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<tr>
<td>To ensure your children’s future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal health reasons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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MdM France – Calais – 2014

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<td>EU CITIZENS (N=418)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC REASONS: UNABLE TO EARN A LIVING IN HOME COUNTRY</td>
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<td>POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, ETHNIC, SEXUAL ORIENTATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>TO ESCAPE FROM WAR</td>
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<td>TO JOIN OR FOLLOW SOMEONE</td>
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<td>FAMILY CONFLICTS</td>
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<td>TO ENSURE YOUR CHILDREN’S FUTURE</td>
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<td>PERSONAL HEALTH REASONS</td>
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<td>OTHERS</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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The majority (66.0%) of all people seen at the MDM 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). 63.2% 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 to not 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 procedures (stricter 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 (16.9%), Greece (19%) and Germany (38.9%) had the lowest figures. In contrast, 94.2% of patients seen in the Netherlands had the lowest figures. In contrast, 94.2% of patients seen in Greece (17%), and Germany (38.1%) were EU nationals with permission to reside.

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 (374/1), 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 (77.5%). 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; 11.8% 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 90 days).

Administrative status by country (%)

|            | BE | CH | DE | EL | ES | FR | NL | SE | UK | SI | CRO | HU | IRL | IT | LU | MT | NL | NO | PL | PT | RO | SK | SI | TR |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Citizen of non-EU country without permission to reside | 70.5 | 15.4 | 9.0 | 14.3 | 54.9 | 9.1 | 94.3 | 20.4 | 57.6 | 44.6 | 56.1 | 61.2 |
| EU citizen with no permission to reside | 13.4 | 1.4 | 2.9 | 1.7 | 8.6 | 8.8 | 0.0 | 20.9 | 0.5 | 9.5 | 3.9 | 2.0 |
| Total without permission to reside | 83.9 | 16.8 | 38.1 | 17.0 | 63.5 | 67.9 | 94.2 | 47.3 | 58.0 | 54.7 | 66.0 | 63.2 |
| No residence permit requirement (nationals) | 1.8 | 0.6 | 172 | 744 | 0.8 | 5.0 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 1.0 | 7.5 | 4.7 | 1.8 |
| Asylum seeker (application or appeal ongoing) | 3.9 | 77.5 | 3.2 | 11.0 | 2.4 | 13.4 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 1.3 | 14.1 | 12.7 | 11.0 |
| Valid residence permit | 1.8 | 61.6 | 4.4 | 20.9 | 15.9 | 2.5 | 11.1 | 7.5 | 4.0 | 2.6 |
| EU national staying for less than three months (no residence permit required) | 2.4 | 31.8 | 16.2 | 3.8 | 12.1 | 21.0 | 0.0 | 24.2 | 1.5 | 6.3 | 3.0 | 10.6 |
| Visas of all types | 1.4 | 0.6 | 76.6 | 0.5 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 11.8 | 3.3 | 3.6 | 1.3 |
| EU national with permission to reside | 2.8 | 0.3 | 5.0 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 0.3 | 1.9 | 17.0 | 0.1 |
| Residence permit from another EU country | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 1.6 | 0.4 | 14.0 | 0.0 | 14.3 | 0.4 | 2.5 | 16.0 | 0.1 |
| Specific situation concerning right to remain | 0.4 | 0.6 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 11.1 | 17.0 | 0.7 |
| Total with permission to reside | 15.0 | 83.1 | 60.8 | 83.0 | 36.7 | 32.1 | 5.0 | 49.5 | 34.6 | 62.9 | 34.0 | 33.2 |
| Don’t know | 0.5 | 0.3 | 1.2 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.0 | 3.3 | 7.6 | 2.0 | 12.3 | 3.5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
The majority (66.0%) of all people seen at the MD-IM 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) 63.9% 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 2004/38 66 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.”

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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% 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 90 days).

67 In the Netherlands, the programme is specifically geared towards undocumented immigrants from outside the EU
68 In France, asylum seekers (asylum seekers housed in three reception facilities) and family members of documented asylum seekers (including EU nationals and non-EU nationals) have personal healthcare coverage if they are destitute (through AME in France and AMU in Belgium), however, only certain categories of people are covered (asylum seekers/with permission to reside). The French state medical assistance is a full healthcare coverage mechanism for undocumented migrants, under specific conditions and administrative constraints. Assistance from support workers is helpful. Paris, France – 2014
69 The Dublin II regulation lays down the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (www.asylumlawdatabase.eu). EURODAC is the computerised central database of fingerprint data, as well as the electronic tool for transmission between the Member States of their central databases.

<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>HAP</th>
<th>CAP</th>
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<td>Citizen of non-EU country without permission to reside</td>
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<td>15.9</td>
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<td>9.9</td>
<td>94.3</td>
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<td>72.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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<td>9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total without permission to reside</td>
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<td>38.1</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>66.0</td>
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<td>13.4</td>
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<td>14.1</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<td>EU national staying for less than three months (no residence permit required)</td>
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<td>12.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visas of all types 69</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU national with permission to reside</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<td>Residence permit from another EU country</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total with permission to reside</td>
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<td>83.1</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>42.9</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>7.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</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>
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<tr>
<td>Missing data (%)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>4.3</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 this category
C. Or equivalent situation (recent immigrants <90 days)
D. Tourism, short-stay, student, work
E. Adequate financial resources and valid healthcare coverage
F. Including subsidiary/humanitarian 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 II/Eurodac regulation were relatively (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 (38.9%, up to 62.6% 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 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:

83.0% in Switzerland where most patients are provided with accommodation for up to 62.6% in France) or to have 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).

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>13.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>EL</td>
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<td>NL</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOCIAL ISOLATION

When asked about moral support: 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).

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 could rely on or turn to if the need arose.

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 as their central power source.
**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 19 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 62.6% in France) or to have their 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 Europe deemed their accommodation to be harmful to their health or that of their children. In Istanbul, this proportion reached 57.9%.

---

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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.

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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 line: on average, over the past three months, taking into account all sources of income.

**SOCIAL ISOLATION**

When asked about moral support, one in two people 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 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).

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

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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 went they said that 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 heard benefits for a couple of days. I’ve never had this before. I stay in a place with 18 men in one room. The electricity doesn’t work. I don’t feel very healthy. I think my living situation is now affecting my health.

MdM Germany – Munich – December 2014
ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

COVERAGE OF HEALTHCARE CHARGES

Two thirds (62.9%) of patients seen in the MdM European centres had no healthcare coverage when they first came to MdM programmes.

COVERAGE OF HEALTHCARE CHARGES BY COUNTRY (%)

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>57.8</td>
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<td>23.7</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

In Germany, 73.6% of patients only had access to emergency healthcare. 15.5% of patients 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 redirected to facilities within the mainstream healthcare system. 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, as 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 Munich 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 14.0% had had access to all healthcare coverage. 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 arearged 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 (47.9%) had no access to healthcare at all, a quarter (28.7%) had access to some subsidised healthcare – i.e. by paying a reduced fee for a defined package of care – and 15.0% 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 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 8.1% of them had healthcare rights in another EU country.

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 a GP; the entry point to the healthcare system. This was in a political context where the government was (and still is) increasingly giving priority to controlling immigration. Zoe, a 60-year-old Moroccan woman, is undocumented. She lives at her sister’s home. Zoe 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. Zoe had urgent medical coverage (AMU specifically for undocumented migrants) for a while, but she has to renew it too often, besides it was hard to get to the CPAS each time. Zoe 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 an emergency, while getting the card takes time, it is an emergency for them!”

Zoe would like to work in order to contribute to her family’s needs. “It is possible to work underdected but you can’t contribute to anything. You are nobody when working underecld. 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 CPAS defines the period, which varies from one day to six months.

MdM Belgium – Brussels – December 2014

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In the Netherlands, 82.5% of patients seen in Amsterdam and The Hague could access general practitioners, albeit with a financial contribution, and 14.0% had had access to all healthcare coverage. 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 arearged 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 (47.9%) had no access to healthcare at all, a quarter (28.7%) had access to some subsidised healthcare – i.e. by paying a reduced fee for a defined package of care – and 15.0% 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 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 8.1% of them had healthcare rights in another EU country.
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 Munchen 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.

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In the Netherlands, 82.5% of patients seen in Amsterdam and The Hague could access general practitioners, albeit with a financial contribution, and 70% had access at all.

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In Belgium, 60.9% of patients had no healthcare coverage. It was in a political context where the government was and still is) increasingly going against the financial principle that the government should not be the insurer of the sick: a situation: "It’s difficult for me to stand for hours outside in the cold with many other patients who do not have a GP to an emergency unit or a specialist consultation. Direct access to GP services or specialist consultations is not possible for undocumented migrants in Belgium, unless they have a GP in another country without permission to reside.

In Amsterdam and The Hague, 70.4% had access to GP services.

In Spain, 70.4% had access to some subsidised healthcare – i.e. by paying a reduced fee for a defined package of care – and 15.1% were EU citizens with coverage in another country.

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BARRIERS IN ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Only 23.0% of all patients surveyed in seven European countries said they had experienced no difficulty in accessing healthcare before going to an MDM clinic.103 Another third (33.9%) had not tried to access healthcare; with huge differences between France (15.4%) and the bottom in Turkey (42.0%) and the UK (52.2%) at the top. While some of these people may not have needed healthcare, it is also the case that others have internalised 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 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 malfunctioning;
- 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—who whether this need 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 difficult 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 (45.5%), the cost of consultations and treatment (44.6%), the language barrier (40.9%) and the fear of being reported or arrested (44.9%). The proportion of patients reporting a bad previous experience in the healthcare system is also particularly high (216%), versus 2% on average in Europe.26

The story of Said, a 23-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”. 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 €85 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 of the World Sweden had told me: that the official barrier was only cost €5. I then asked the staff if they knew about the new law and they did not.

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 61.2% 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 2002, 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 reflect 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 Spain teams have 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 care), 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 (over the previous 12 months) was reported by 15.2% of patients seen by MDM in Europe— in Istanbul, 37.1% of the patients experienced this situation and a quarter in Spain.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No difficulties</th>
<th>Administrative problems</th>
<th>No knowledge or understanding of the system</th>
<th>Language barrier</th>
<th>Healthcare coverage too expensive</th>
<th>No healthcare coverage obtained</th>
<th>Fear of being reported or arrested</th>
<th>Healthcare coverage in another EU country</th>
<th>Previous experience in the healthcare system</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>12.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDM Greece</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDM Spain</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDM Switzerland</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDM Denmark</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

102 No data for Belgium and Switzerland.
103 They also may have perceived more significant barriers than exist in reality because of their lack of knowledge about their rights in the two countries where they have taken refuge.

Maria is a 39-year-old unemployed Greek nurse. She had healthcare coverage until 2009. Earning about €4000 per month, she had an undisclosed 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 costs of required examinations nor the medicines”.

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, for those who need health care, access is often difficult. The patients 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

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 stay with my daughter mostly. I don’t want to ask her for rent. My son and his partner used to rent it but I was in good terms. I 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 work anymore. My children and friends have helped me 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 insulin. Sometimes I got tablets 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 the hospital. They gave me the medicine, I pay them. I could and then left immediately, with the urologist in the hospital. I hope you can remit it. I’m not going back to that hospital!”

MDM Germany – Munich – December 2014

Miriam was a 35-year-old Moroccan woman. Her husband, Ahmed, had worked in Spain from 1989 to 2007. unded for undocumented migrants. This was the case in 2011. Ahmed and Miram unsuccessfully looked for work and finally moved to Belgium, where they also got undocumented jobs. In 2014, Ahmed was affected by a cardiac abnormality, the baby underwent surgery, although the parents did not have sufficient financial means. The CMAS refused to cover the expenses, claiming the parents had legal documents in Spain where they had rights to care. As they had left Spain four years before, the response from the CMAS is legally unsatisfactory, as rights to healthcare coverage only last for one year. The child needed a second operation, but the parents still had no financial means. A second healthcare coverage request was rejected, as the CMAS 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 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. Miram was operated on for an abscess in the brain, but the infection could not be controlled. In addition, the medical staff discovered that Miram had diabetes, which she was not aware of. Miram died in hospital a few weeks later. Her daughter was 26 months old.

After her wife’s death, Ahmed could not work and take care of his daughter on his own and Sonia was placed in a foster family. As a result, he had to leave his job and the foster family had to pay for his daughter’s operation, although their healthcare coverage, yet despite the medical certificate, the registration at the CMAS has still not been completed until today. The last request to the KDS was finally accepted at the end of 2014.

MDM Belgium – Antwerp– December 2014

104 In 2014, proportions are not valid in Belgium and Switzerland (where less than 10% of people were asked this question) and the response rate was particularly low in France and the UK, so this figure must be treated with great caution.
105 Please also note that the point of destination who have made a conscientious objection, i.e. who have refused to exclude undocumented migrants from healthcare, has increased.
106 For information purposes only, proportions are valid in Belgium and Switzerland: less than 10% of people were asked this question and the response rate was particularly low in Greece, France and the UK. Migrant sites: 16.4% in SE, 13.2% in NL, 10.0% in EL, 12.7% in FR, 8.1% in IT, 7.9% in BE, 62.3% in UK and 22.4% in TR.
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 significantly decreased in Spain since 2002: it was 52.0% in 2002, 22.0% in 2003 and 15.0% in 2010. 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 16/2002, the MdM Spain teams have explored different channels for integrating migrants into the mainstream health services105. 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.

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In Greece, thanks to the new presidential decree of 5 June 2004, 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’s enforcement is crucial. MdM special 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 Germany – Munich - December 2014

Giving up seeking healthcare was a common experience among migrants in Istanbul. For example, some patients reported that they did not go to the hospital because they did not know how to make an appointment (21.9%), language barriers (12.7%), 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 (21.6% 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<0.05). All these dramatic differences reflect the tremendously limited access to healthcare for migrants (particular those undocumented in Turkey)

BARRES TO ACCESS HEALTHCARE IN SEVEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND IN TURKEY (%) 103

103. They also may have perceived more significant barriers than exist in reality because of their lack of knowledge about their rights in the five countries where they have serious health issues.

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MDM Germany – Munich - December

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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 seeking access to healthcare.

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 friends 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 have 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

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 Belgium, Greece, Denmark, France, Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and the UK (93.5% of women and 85.5% 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 (57.6% compared with 34.4% among all patients, p<0.001).

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Fears of being reported or arrested were a frequently cited barrier in Istanbul (85.0%) and Latvia (69.4%), where, as mentioned before, the authorities, it is possible that many undocumented migrants are not aware of this and still fear being arrested, thus explaining the high number of people having reported such a limitation.

In Europe, half of the interviewed patients (52.0%) reported such a limitation (exeter sometimes, frequently or very frequently)\(^{108}\). 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.

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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 have 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

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\(^{111}\). Among them, 84.4% reported at least one violent experience in BE, CH, DE, 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 (57.6%) compared with 34.4% among all patients, p<0.001.

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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.
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 7.3% 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 57.1% of sexual assaults, 37.1% of incidents of documents or money being confiscated, 19.1% of psychological violence and 46.8% 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 17% 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.
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- Psychological violence (42.7%);
- Hunger (35.7%);
- Sexual assault (27.6%), reported by 37.6% of women (compared with 73% of men) and rape (4.8%), reported by 24.4% 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 57% of sexual assaults, 37% of incidents of documents or money being confiscated, 19% of psychological violence and 40.8% of experiences of hunger.

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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 BY GENDER (AMONG PATIENTS INTERVIEWED ON THIS SUBJECT IN EIGHT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in a country at war</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical threats, imprisonment or torture for ideas</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence by police or armed forces</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaten up or injured (domestic or not)</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually assaulted or molested</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money or documents confiscated</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital mutilations</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other forms of violence</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 57% 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.
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 2.0% 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.

In Istanbul, almost all the patients (98.3%) had at least one health condition that had never been monitored or treated before coming to MdM. This concerned half of the patients seen in Switzerland, 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%).

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 (92.2%), 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, only 9.5% of migrant patients had at least one chronic health problem that had never been monitored or treated before coming to MdM. This concerned 70.2% 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.
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 2.0% 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 surveys 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).

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's Polyclinic in Patras. Since then, Natalia has been treated at the Mdm Polyclinic which covers the cost of treatments 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 hospitals in the seven European countries 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 (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 (82.6%), 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 particularly high in Istanbul (97.7%), Germany (79.7%), and France (76.9%).

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, 31.7% of patients had at least one chronic health problem that had never been monitored or treated before coming to Mdm. This is significantly higher in Switzerland (74.3%), France (68.9%) and Germany (79.5%). In Istanbul, almost all the patients were in this situation.

For information purposes, missing values: 29.4% in CH, 34.4% in DE, 68.2% in EL, 61.2% in ES, 60.6% in NL, 35.6% in HN, 62.2% in UK, 6.7% in TR. Questions not asked in Denmark.

Treatments were regarded as essential by patients to provide them with whatever certain mean deteriorations in the patients' health or a significantly poorer prognosis. In other cases, they were regarded as precautionary. There is no comparison here of outcomes mentioned on a scale of severity.
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, stress and psychosomatic problems (5.8%), *depressive syndromes* (2.9% of consultations). Obviously, psychiatric 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 issues (11.0% and 0.3%) were most frequent – reproductive disorders accounted for 1.7% of consultations.

The most frequently reported broad disease categories were psychological problems (4.2%) and contraception (1.7%).

A MORE EFFECTIVE HEPATITIS C TREATMENT. BUT UNAFFORDABLE!

It is estimated that 85 million people worldwide are infected with hepatitis C, a liver infection that often causes potentially life-threatening cirrhosis and cancer. There is currently no vaccine against hepatitis C. Treatments available come with serious side effects and with low cure rates (50% to 70%). A new generation of drugs now brings great hope: ‘direct-acting antivirals’ are better tolerated by patients and the cure rate exceeds 90%.

However, the first drug of this kind, sofosbuvir, is sold at exorbitant prices (e.g. €480,000 in France for the full course of treatment).

This means that social security systems in many countries have started to select the most seriously ill patients to be treated from the new treatments. This goes against the public health benefits of treating all patients in order to stop the spread of infection, on top of being highly unethical.

MDM welcomes real medical innovation, but abusive prices put at risk the very existence of our public health model, which is based on solidarity and equity. This is why in February 2015, MDM opposed the patent for sofosbuvir at the European Patent Office. MDM wants affordable medicines for hepatitis C for all.

MEdICAL coNSULTATIoN AT ASEM – ISTANbUL – TUrKEy – 2014

Peter, a 25-year-old Nigerian man, was temporarily housed in an asylum seeker centre after a period of detention as a result of being undocumented. During his period in detention, his psychiatric problems had worsened dramatically, which resulted in a long period of isolation. A court decision released him and housed him in the asylum seeker centre. As there was lack of appropriate care, after a month MDM Netherlands became involved to oversee Peter’s admission to a psychiatric ward, which specialised in treating patients from different cultural backgrounds. His psychosis was diagnosed and Peter was treated for more than a year as an inpatient at the psychiatric hospital, which is located in a small village in the countryside, surrounded by fresh air and very quiet.

Gert, an MDM Netherlands volunteer doctor testifies: “I saw a big man fearing for his life because of his visual and auditory hallucinations. Only after several months of treatment did his condition improve. After a year, Peter had recovered well, he had some relapses, but his delusions reduced and he became a more sociable man, made some friends in a church in a city near by and travelled there by train, with the permission of his doctors. However, the threat of being expelled remained. One day he called me in fear from his room in the hospital. He had been apprehended in the train, for no reason as he had a ticket. He was nearly arrested because the policemen thought they recognised him ‘from a list of people with illegal status who had to be arrested’. While Peter was more or less cured of his phobias, he was still taking strong medication and now, suddenly, the reality of the fear of being harassed and arrested by the police entered his life. This event occurred when Peter was still a patient at the psychiatric hospital and he had a permit to stay. Even though they apologised, the attitude of the police was harmful for Peter who now has a new fear that inhibits him from socialising.

The testimony 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. My mother was just a girl and she was growing up in the same way. She never really knew how to talk to. Uganda is a society where people of my sexual orientation are not accepted. The homophobia in the country is extreme and it’s tough growing up in such an environment. I managed to get out of the country and come to the UK.”

“When I first came to the UK I thought life would be so easy. I thought I would be free. But it turned out that wasn’t the case. In the UK I had to live with a person close to my family and so it wasn’t easy for me to express myself. I had to hide who I was and I had to pretend that I was happy and this was hurting me on the inside. As a human being, if you continue hiding who you are and hide in what is due to you, most of the time it will affect you. I didn’t know what was happening to me, what was going on around me. I started developing illnesses. I started having headaches and unusual pains. I had no one to talk to. When I started feeling sick and felt pain inside me there was nothing I could do about it. I had to continuously hide 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 MDM 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’ve never experienced in my life. They took good care of me and we were so lovely 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 MDM-UK assured me and said, ‘Everyone is entitled to medical care no matter what their visa status is.’ The MDM volunteer immediately started searching for all the GPs in the area. She asked whether I had been registered at their practices. I’d never forgotten that day. They arranged an appointment for me and everything was started out 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 we all need 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. It helped me to have a safe place where I could meet people like me to talk about our experiences and open up to each other. Little by little 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 immigration 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 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 MDM 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 down. People are crying, people are ill and to be in such a place makes being living, 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 MDM 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 around them. So they were sick and having the same feelings as 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’m 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’m 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 in this GP. Now that I’m a free man I have plans for the future. I had always dreamt of on day (I) could get a proper job and provide for my family. I believe that now is my time to shine. I’m looking forward to starting work and I’m looking forward to having a place of my own.”

MDM UK – London – September 2014
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 13.1%, respiratory 10.0% and cardiovascular 9.5%.

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%); consultations for depression and depressive syndromes (2.9% of consultations). Obviously, psychiatric 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 9.6%; menstrual problems 9.5%. Problems related to using psychoactive substances were almost non-existent (0.4%).

The most frequently identified gynaecological problems were: pelvic pain and dysmenorrhea (0.4%); infection (0.4%); contraceptive failure (0.4%).

Peter, a 25-year-old Nigerian man, was temporarily housed in a gynaecology unit of a gynaecological clinic. After a period of detention as a result of being undocumented. During his period in detention, his gynaecological problems had worsened dramatically, which resulted in a long period of isolation. A court decision released him and housed him in the gynaecology unit. As there was a lack of appropriate care, after a month MDM Netherlands became involved to oversee Peter’s admission to a psychiatric ward, which specialised in treating patients from different cultural backgrounds. His psychosis was diagnosed and Peter was treated for more than a year as an inpatient at the psychiatric hospital, which is located in a small village in the countryside, surrounded by fresh air and very quiet.

Gerd, an MDM Netherlands volunteer doctor testifies: “I saw a big man fearing for his life because of his visual and auditory hallucinations. Only after several months of treatment did his condition improve. After a year, Peter had recovered well, he had some relapses, but his delusions retracted and he became a more sociable man. He made friends in a church in a nearby town. He had been apprehended in the train, for no reason as he had a ticket. He was nearly arrested because the police thought they recognised him from a list of people with illegal status who had been arrested. One day, he called me in fear from his room in the hospital. He had been apprehended in the train, for no reason as he had a ticket. He was nearly arrested because the police thought they recognised him from a list of people with illegal status who had been arrested. When Peter was still a patient, at the psychiatric hospital and he had a permit to stay. Even though they apologised, the attitude of the police was harmful for Peter who now has a new fear that inhibits him from socialising.

MDM Netherlands – Amsterdam – November 2014

The testimony 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 and I had to work abroad to support my family while growing up. I didn’t have the opportunity to talk to someone who understands me. Uganda is a country where people of my sexual orientation are not accepted. The homophobia in the country is extreme and it’s tough growing up in such an environment. I managed to get out of the country and come to the UK.”

“When I first came to the UK I thought life would be so easy. I thought I would be free. But it turned out that wasn’t the case. In the UK I had to live with a person close to my family and so it wasn’t easy for me to express myself. I had to hide who I was and I had to pretend that I was happy and this was hurting me on the inside. As a human being, if you continue hiding who you are and hide in what is dear to you, most of the time it will affect you. I didn’t know what was happening to me, what was going on around me. I started developing illnesses. I started having headaches and unusual pains. I had no one to talk to. When I started feeling sick and felt pain inside me there was nothing I could do about it. I had to continuously hide 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 MDM 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 lovely and kind. I was so grateful. 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 MDUK assured me and said, ‘Everyone is entitled to medical care no matter what their visa status is’. The MDM volunteer immediately started searching for all the GPs in the area. She asked whether I had been registered at their practices. I never forget that day. They arranged an appointment for me and everything was started up 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 we all need 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. It helped me to have a safe place where I could meet people like me to talk about our experiences and open up to each other. Little by little I was healing because I was receiving medication that I was taking on a daily basis. The social groups helped me build confidence and I was even referred to an immigration 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 MDM 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 down. 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 drizzly. 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 MDM UK GP)

“A person was able to get information about what was happening around them. Some people didn’t even know what was happening around them. Some were even so sick that they were crying. Some were even so sick that they were crying. Some were even so sick that they were too sick to move. Some of them were being ill, and that’s why I was in the detention centre. After leaving the detention centre I was granted refugee status. I’m now free to live. I have the freedom to be who I am. 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’m 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 dreamt of living here, that I could live here but not for how long. Now I am living here and I believe now is my time to shine. I am looking forward to starting work and I am looking forward to having a place of my own.”

MDM UK – London – September 2014

A MORE EFFECTIVE HEPATITIS C TREATMENT - BUT UNAFFORDABLE!

It is estimated that 185 million people worldwide are infected with hepatitis C. a liver infection that often causes potentially life-threatening cirrhosis and cancer. There is currently no vaccine against hepatitis C. Treatments available come with serious side effects and with low cure rates (50% to 70%). A new generation of drugs now brings great hope: ‘direct-acting antivirals’ are better tolerated by patients and the cure rate exceeds 90%.

However the first drug of its kind, sofosbuvir, is sold at exorbitant prices (e.g €450,000 in France for the full course of treatment).

This means that social security systems in many countries have started to select the most seriously ill patients to benefit from the new treatment. This goes against the public health benefits of treating all patients in order to stop the spread of the infection, on top of being highly unethical.

MDM welcomes real medical innovation, but abusive prices put at risk the very existence of our public health model, which is based on solidarity and equity. This is why in February 2013, MDM opposed the patent for sofosbuvir at the European Patent Office. MDM wants affordable medicines for hepatitis C for all!

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 good 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, 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 and the European Social Charter so dearly, at the same time Europe tolerates national laws that hinder vaccination coverage or antenatal and postnatal care from being universal and available to all children and women residing on its territory. MDM urges the European Union to develop the necessary mechanisms to transform its impressive body of soft recommendations into hard facts when it comes to the most basic human rights of children and pregnant women. If the EU is not about making its Member States respect human rights, what is about it?

- 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 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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120 European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2013. Impact of the crisis on access to care
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122 European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2013. Impact of the crisis on access to care. 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 good quality care, equity and solidarity.

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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.

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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 the Health and Food Safety or the views of the European Commission and/or the EFSF Executive Agency and any other body of the European Union. 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:


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