PARALLEL SESSION 6 – SATURDAY JUNE 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2019, 08h00 – 09h30

Mental health and psychosomatic complaints in refugees and migrants

- A. Zbidat: Concepts of trauma, complaints, somatization and coping styles in refugees from Syria: A qualitative study
- J. Schellong: Multidisciplinary treatment approaches and group therapy in the treatment of mental health problems in refugees
- E. Georgiadou: Posttraumatic Stress and Motivators of Refugee aid Volunteers and Fulltime Employees
- J. Denkinger: Explaining traumatization and psychotherapy in 10 minutes: Development of a psychoeducational movie for refugees
- A. Kersting: Development and evaluation of an Arabic-language self-management smartphone app for traumatized Syrian refugees in Germany

Theme
Refugees are at high risk of developing mental disorders. Many of them do not have sufficient access to mental health support. In addition, culture-sensitive psychotherapeutic offers for traumatized refugees are lacking. In the symposium, a qualitative study on subjective concepts of trauma, self-reported complaints, hints for somatization and coping strategies in Syrian refugees in Germany (Zbidat et al.) will be presented. Two further studies will give a detailed insight into the conceptual development and contents of an Arabic-language self-management smartphone app for traumatized Syrian refugees in Germany (Kersting et al.) and a psychoeducational movie for refugees (Denkinger et al.). The fourth contribution will provide a literature overview on the effect of group therapy and nonverbal therapy in mental health problems in refugees (Schellong). Finally, Georgiadou et al. will demonstrate a survey on the motivation for helping activities and the specific stressors of refugee aid volunteers and fulltime employees.

Takeaways
1. Refugees have experienced traumatic events and they display a high risk group concerning their mental health.
2. The therapy management of refugees and migrants is a novel and specific task for mental health services and psychosomatic departments.
3. First successful models of health services can be helpful in establishing further mental health interventions.

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Co-chair: Julia Schellong, Dr. med., Clinic and Polyclinic for Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy of the Carl Gustav Carus University Hospital, Dresden, DE
Concepts of trauma, complaints, somatization and coping styles in refugees from Syria: a qualitative study

Aim
The aim of this qualitative study was to explore subjective concepts of trauma, self-reported complaints, hints for somatization and coping strategies in Syrian refugees.

Methods
Semi-structured interviews based on the Cultural Formulation Interview of the DSM-5 (CFI) were conducted with Syrian refugees with residence permission in Germany. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed according to the qualitative content analysis of Mayring. Main categories were determined on the basis of the predefined interview guideline and inductive subcategories were extracted from the transcripts.

Results
16 refugees participated (50% women; mean age: 35.5 years, SD=11.2; mean education in years: 10.0, SD=4.5; mean duration of stay in Germany: 23.3 months, SD=6.6). War experiences were the most frequently reported subjective trauma concept. Other concepts concerned post-migration stressors, death of a family member/friend, illness and physical or psychological violence in the family. Frequently reported complaints were sleeping disturbance, cardiovascular symptoms, rumination and pain. In the half of the participants, hints for somatization could be observed. Following coping strategies were identified: activity, religious coping, avoidance, emotional coping, cognitive coping, social contacts and integration.

Conclusion
War-related traumatic events are the most common subjective trauma concept in Syrian refugees. The self-reported complaints demonstrate somatoform, depressive and posttraumatic symptoms. The Syrian refugees should be screened for somatization, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder and should receive targeted interventions that consider and support individual coping resources.

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Multidisciplinary treatment approaches and group therapy in the treatment of mental health problems in refugees

Aim
Trauma-associated and post migration problems often effect refugees in their efforts to integrate in the new country. Many refugees do not have sufficient access to mental health support for these problems because of multiple barriers in national and refugee specific health systems, including limited availability of mental health professionals and interpreter-assisted communication. Existing health care offers are overburdened leading to long waiting lists for trauma specific treatment. There is rising evidence that multidisciplinary treatment may have a positive effect on trauma related symptoms in refugees.

Methods
A literature overview on the effect of group therapy and nonverbal therapy in mental health problems in refugees was conducted. A variety of techniques and treatment settings were examined for their applicability in a trauma outpatient clinic. Participant statements and provider satisfaction were included as qualitative data.

Results
In addition to essential referral, social work and medical interventions in individual contact, group offerings play a significant role. Group therapies with nonverbal methods that attempt to overcome the barriers of linguistic and cultural differences including acupuncture, relaxation, art and rhythm group showed the most positive feedback and best compliance and a positive effect on trauma-related symptoms of traumatized refugees.

Conclusion
Scalable psychological interventions and group therapy aimed at reducing psychological distress in the mental health support in refugees may be a first entry into treatment on one hand and, on the other hand, allow more patients to be treated.

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Posttraumatic Stress and Motivators of Refugee aid Volunteers and Fulltime Employees

Aim
Since 2015 about 1.3 million asylum seekers were documented in Germany. A huge group of volunteers (VAD) engaged in support activities for them, like accompanying them to official departments, teaching them the language etc. On the other side, municipalities and different state departments hired new employees as full-time aid workers (FAD). We surveyed the motivation for helping activities and the specific stressors in refugee aid.

Methods
This is a cross-sectional questionnaire survey. Depression was measured with Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ), traumatic events and posttraumatic stress with the Essen Trauma Inventory (ETI).

Results
A total number of 111 aid workers participated, 39 (35.1%) were Volunteering Aid Workers and 72 (64.9%) Fulltime Aid Workers (FAD). 30.6% of aid workers have own immigration background; 12.8% of VAD vs. 40.3% of FAD. VAD reported religious motivation in first place, FAD vocational motivation, but also charity motives in about 70%. Depression (PHQ-9 ≥ 10) was measured in 9.0%; in 11.8% of the VAD vs. in 8.5% of the FAD. Traumatic events were reported in 91% in the sample vs. 24% in the German general population. None of the VAD but 5.1% of the FAD fulfilled the psychometric requirements of a PTSD.

Conclusion
FAD and VAD both present risk factors for mental disorders. They should be supported by regular preventive screenings and trainings for resilient mental health.

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Explaining traumatization and psychotherapy in 10 minutes: Development of a psychoeducational movie for refugees

Aim
Refugees are at high risk of developing mental disorders, mainly post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety or depression. However, culture-sensitive psychotherapeutic offers for traumatized refugees are lacking. Moreover, reservations about psychotherapy and fear of stigmatization on the refugees’ side, contribute to an impeded access to help offers. To improve this situation, a psychoeducative animated movie for adult refugees was developed. The intervention aims to 1) inform about mental illnesses, coping strategies and psychotherapy, 2) reduce shame, feelings of guilt and stigmatization regarding symptoms of mental disorders and psychotherapy, as well as 3) increase the use of functional and decrease the use of dysfunctional coping strategies in refugees.

Methods
To develop this mental health literacy intervention, preliminary studies with Iraqi refugees and their caregivers about the refugee’s attitudes towards psychotherapy, mental illnesses, and coping strategies were conducted. Near completion, the movie was piloted with refugees and mental health professionals.

Results
Pre-development, the results of our preliminary studies showed the high need for additional psychoeducational interventions to support refugee caregivers in their everyday work. Furthermore, we found that refugees consider culture-based coping strategies such as praying very helpful. Post-development, the comprehensibility and cultural adequacy of the intervention were confirmed in the pilot run.

Conclusion
The insights we gained during the development of this intervention demonstrate the importance of early interventions for traumatized refugees in terms of a stepped care model. A longitudinal mixed-method evaluation of the present intervention with refugees is planned.

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Development and evaluation of an Arabic-language self-management smartphone app for traumatized Syrian refugees in Germany

Aim
Since 2014, Syrians represent the largest group of refugees in Germany. Many experienced war and violence and bear an increased risk of mental disorders. Recent studies among Syrian war-refugees revealed a high variability but generally high prevalence of PTSD (34%-83%) and depression (37%). Due to institutional and personal barriers, Syrian refugees face major challenges to meet their mental health care needs in Germany. The aim of the study is to develop and evaluate an Arabic-language self-management app for traumatized Syrian refugees in Germany.

Methods
On the basis of a comprehensive literature review and focus groups with Syrian refugees we developed an interactive app containing evidence-based cognitive-behavioral and resource-oriented techniques aimed at improving the management of posttraumatic stress. The app has a modular design, containing psychoeducation, interactive exercises, self-assessments and individualized feedback. It is currently evaluated in an RCT (prepost-assessment, 3-month follow-up) testing 4-week access to the app against an Arabic language information brochure. The main outcome is posttraumatic stress. Several secondary outcomes (e.g., depression, quality of life) and the cost-effectiveness are also evaluated.

Results
RCT results will be available after March 2020. The presentation will give a detailed insight into the conceptual development and contents of the app, and an overview on the RCT study design.

Conclusion
The results of the study will provide evidence, whether our self-management app can successfully reduce posttraumatic stress among Syrian refugees. After a positive evaluation, the app will be publicly available, improving access of Syrian refugees to mental health care in Germany.

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