

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN CRISES

As part of the Hub Communities' annual theme 2024: Global Health in Conflict Settings

O. Ivanova (1) and M. McGowan (2,3) on behalf of the Women's Health Community

1 Institute of Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine, LMU University Hospital, Munich, Germany 2 Heidelberg Institute of Global Health, Heidelberg University, Germany

3 School for Data and Computational Thinking, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

INTRODUCTION



- Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of girls and women are often overlooked and underprioritized in crises settings.
- Approximately 45 million women in crises settings are in urgent need of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services [1].
- A systematic review and studies from Hub members found that refugee adolescent girls and women often lack adequate SRH information, face poor SRH outcomes (e.g., poor menstrual hygiene, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, unplanned pregnancies & unsafe abortions), and have limited access to and availability of adequate SRH services [2-5].

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

SERVICE PACKAGE FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (MISP for SRH)

PREVENT MORTALITY, MORBIDITY AND **DISABILITY IN CRISIS-AFFECTED POPULATIONS**

Ensure the health cluster identifies an organisation to lead the MISP for SRH

Prevent sexual violence and respond to the needs of survivors

Prevent and reduce morbidity and mortality due to HIV and other STIs

Prevent excess maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality

Prevent unintended pregnancies

Plan for comprehensive SRH services integrated into primary health care as soon as possible

Ensure that safe abortion care is available, to the full extent of the law, in health centres and hospitals.

BEST PRACTICE

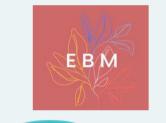
Advocate for the Minimum Initial Service Package for SRH and adapt recommendations for specific vulnerable groups (e.g., adolescent girls) [6] Example:

- Meaningful engagement of target communities in the development of SRH programs
- Develop age- and culturally-appropriate SRH services and information

Develop and implement context, language, and population-tailored SRH communication strategies

• Empowered Birth Movement (EBM): aims to improve maternal health among migrants in Germany through advocacy, evidence-based interventions, and communication

• Zanzu: a project by the BZgA and Sensoa, that provides simple and descriptive online





POLICY & RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Place refugee women and girls at the center of policy, innovation, and research development

Advocate for the implementation of the Minimum Initial Service Package for SRH

Educate women and girls living in refugee camps and welcome centers about SRHR through context, language, and populationtailored communication strategies

Advocate for women's health and SRHR to be added into migrant health policies

Collect data and evidence of women and girls' health in crisis situations to inform sustainable SRH interventions

Fund and sustainably supply essential SRH products (e.g., menstrual hygiene products, condoms, STI tests, HIV tests)

Develop linkage pathways for women and girls to access healthcare and legal services (e.g., post-violence care)

Provide free-of-charge and easily accessible translation services for women to access SRH services [7-8]

Call to Action: Collaborate on migrant and refugee health policy briefs to advocate for SRHR for women and girls

3. Ivanova O. Rai M. Mlahagwa W. Tumuhairwe J. Bakuli A. Nyakato VN. Kemigisha F. A cross-sectional mixed-methods study of sexual and reproductive health knowledge, experiences and access to services among refugee settlement. Uganda, Reprod Health, 2019 Mar 19:16(1):35 doi: 10.1186/s12978-019-0698-5. PMID: 30890170: PMCID: PMC6425697

4.Kemigisha E, Rai M, Mlahagwa W, Nyakato VN, Ivanova O. A Qualitative Study Exploring Menstruation Experiences and Practices among Adolescent Girls Living in the Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2020 Sep 11;17(18):6613. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17186613. PMID: 32932817; PMCID.

5. Ivanova O, Rai M, Kemigisha E. A Systematic Review of Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge, Experiences and Access to Services among Refugee, Migrant and Displaced Girls and Young Women in Africa. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2018 Jul 26;15(8):1583. doi: 10.3390/ijerph15081583. PMID: 30049940

6.Adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) toolkit for humanitarian settings 2020. Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises (2021). https://iawg.net/resources/adolescent-sexual-and-reproductive-health-asrhtoolkit-for-humanitarian-settings-2020-edition. 7.A Kaleidoscope of Migrant Experiences within the German Healthcare System. Global Health Hub Germany. (2023). https://www.globalhealthhub.de/de/news/detail/a-kaleidoscope-of-migrant-experiences-within-the-german-healthcare-system 8.Policy brief on Global Health and Migration. Global Health Hub Germany (2024). Prioritising Migrants and Refugees in the Global Health Discourse: A Policy Brief of the Global Health Hub Germany Community on Global Health and Migration.