

Immigrant Health Service 2009

Background

At 1 January 2009, the number of 'people of concern' under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) mandate was estimated at 42 million worldwide. This includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people and stateless people. In 2008, the UNHCR identified 10.5 million refugees; or 25% of the total population of concern.

Australia accepts around 13,500 refugees annually under the Humanitarian Program, around 3,500 of this group resettle in Victoria. Between 2005 – 08 more than half of the intake was aged < 19 years, with 21% of entrants originating from Sudan and 19% from Burma/Myanmar. In 2008 – 09, humanitarian entrants to Australia originated from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia; in approximately even proportions. Countries of origin included Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Burma/Myanmar. This represents a change in Humanitarian program demographics: in 2005 – 06, 80% of the program came from Africa, while in 2008 – 09 ; 30% were from Iraq and 25% from Burma/Myanmar.

Service model

The immigrant health service includes a weekly outpatient clinic, inpatient consultations, education for service providers, and involvement in policy development at State and national level. There is an affiliation with, and contribution towards, the Victorian Paediatric Tuberculosis Service and the Darebin Community Health Centre Vitamin D Clinic.

The outpatient clinical service has transitioned from providing initial post arrival health screening (although this is still provided if required) to acting as a tertiary consultation service for primary care providers; providing specialist input regarding infectious disease, nutritional, psychological and developmental assessment and management. We provide a generalist service, and are able to review all children in a family simultaneously if required. Medical assessment, dental assessment, immunisation, pathology collection, radiology and pharmacy are provided onsite. We work closely with the infectious diseases and TB clinics as well as the immunisation service. Strategies developed (and in continued use) to improve patient care include:

- Using a community worker to provide a phone reminder before clinic
- Using volunteers to help families negotiate the hospital
- Coordinating other hospital appointments to coincide with clinic (e.g. audiology, ophthalmology)
- Safe prescribing strategies for non English speaking patients
- Block booking interpreters and grouping patients/clinic bookings according to language spoken
- A combined outpatient care model with gastroenterology for children with hepatitis B.

New Developments in 2009

- *Successful application to Department of Health for funding for Refugee Health Fellow for 2009 and again for 2010.*
- *Provision of 45 education sessions including 36 external sessions across Victoria; 14 in regional areas*
- *Production of picture based health information for ESL patients in conjunction with pharmacy (see: http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/resources.cfm?doc_id=10577)*
- *Involvement in State level policy on vitamin D in conjunction with Department of Medicine; Western Hospital and Public Health Branch; Department of Health – production of paediatric high dose vitamin D prescribing guidelines for primary care providers*
- *3 new clinical guidelines developed with external peer review (see weblink above)*
- *Consolidation of links with TB service; Immigrant health clinical staff working in TB clinic.*
- *Development of a combined outpatient care model for children/young people with hepatitis B with the Department of Gastroenterology and Clinical Nutrition*
- *Consolidation of links with Infectious Diseases team at Royal Melbourne Hospital, with Refugee Health Fellows*
- *Increasing role/advocacy in clinical assessment of developmental issues in English as a second language (ESL) patient cohort*
- *Involvement in cultural diversity in Mental Health Committee; Royal Children's Hospital*
- *Streamlining of referral system to Royal Dental Hospital*
- *Review of NES patient attendances for Interpreting Department*
- *Submission to the National Hepatitis B strategy on behalf of the Refugee Health Network of Australia*

Future Developments for 2010

- Additional Registrar/Fellow appointment (0.1 EFT) for weekly Immigrant Health Clinic
- Refugee Health Fellow to work within Western Region Health Centre Vitamin D Clinic

Staffing

| Position | Staff member | PD | Class. | EFT |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Clinic coordinator | Helen Milton | ✓ | AO65 | 0.4 |
| Medical coordination | Georgie Paxton | ✓ | HN21 | 0.1 |
| FFS consultant | Georgie Paxton | | FFS | - |
| FFS consultant | Andy Smith | | FFS | - |
| Fellow | Colette Reveley | ✓ | HM29 | 0.5 |
| Dental therapist | Tatiana Polizzi | ✓ | ZZ01 | 0.05 |
| Community worker | Nagaha Idris | ✓ | XX77 | 0.05 |
| Volunteers | Elly Woudstra, others | N/A | - | - |
| Research nurse | Katrina Sangster | ✓ | YW12 | 0.2 |

Affiliated services/work

TB clinic: Georgie Paxton and Colette Reveley

Darebin Community Health Centre Vitamin D clinic: Kate Thomson and Colette Reveley

Western Region Health Centre Vitamin D clinic: Dr Dave Tickell

Dandenong Hospital Refugee Health Clinic: Dr Danni Bao

Funding

Department of Health recurrent funding – \$89,000 annually

Department of Health non recurrent funding 2010- \$50,000 (Refugee Health Fellow)

Education/presentations 2009

- 3 conference presentations
- 3 invited external workshops
- 9 internal education sessions (nursing, medical, pathology collection, FEAT, paediatric update)
- 33 external education sessions (General Practice Divisions, other public hospitals, refugee health nurses, primary nurses, schools, community groups, other specialists) across a range of topics.

Additional outputs/contributions

Clinical services provided in conjunction with other services

166 additional direct patient contacts were made by the Immigrant Health Team working in conjunction with other health providers during 2009. **98** patients were seen as part of the TB Service, 5 patients were seen as inpatient consultations and **63** patients were seen as part of the Darebin Community Health Service Vitamin D Clinic. **27** advice calls/emails to primary health care providers were provided during 2009.

Website: Immigrant health website developed January 2007; available at:

http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/index.cfm?doc_id=10575 . Currently 13 clinical guidelines.

New guidelines 2009

- Educational Assessment
- Mental Health Resources
- Working with interpreters

Reference groups/committees

| RCH | State level | National level |
|--|--|--|
| Cultural diversity mental health working group | Victorian Refugee Health Network | RACP policy group Paediatric Refugee Health |
| Cultural diversity committee | Working group on Vitamin D policy Initial health assessment refugees Specialist access working group | Refugee pharmaceuticals program review/costing for DHS and DoHA Review RCOA submission to DIAC 2009 |

Research/grants

- Windermere Health Services Fellowship 2010 – Dr Georgie Paxton. Value \$80,000.
- The health status of children and young people of a refugee background in Victoria. Successful project tender DEECD 2007. Budget \$99,990. Final draft submitted April 2009.
- Health literacy and effective health promotion with vulnerable communities. Healthy bones and strong communities. Awarded \$96,555. Report submitted January 2009,

External Awards

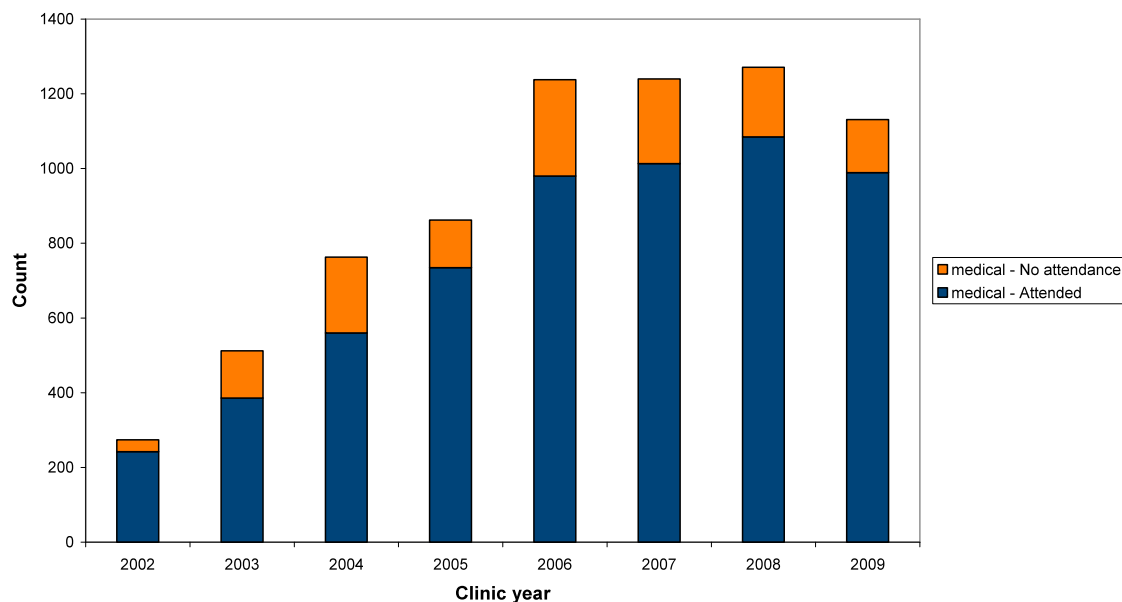
Victorian public health care award 2008. Silver, category award (6) Improving the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities. Immigrant Health Clinic, Royal Children's Hospital

Clinic demographics

Key points

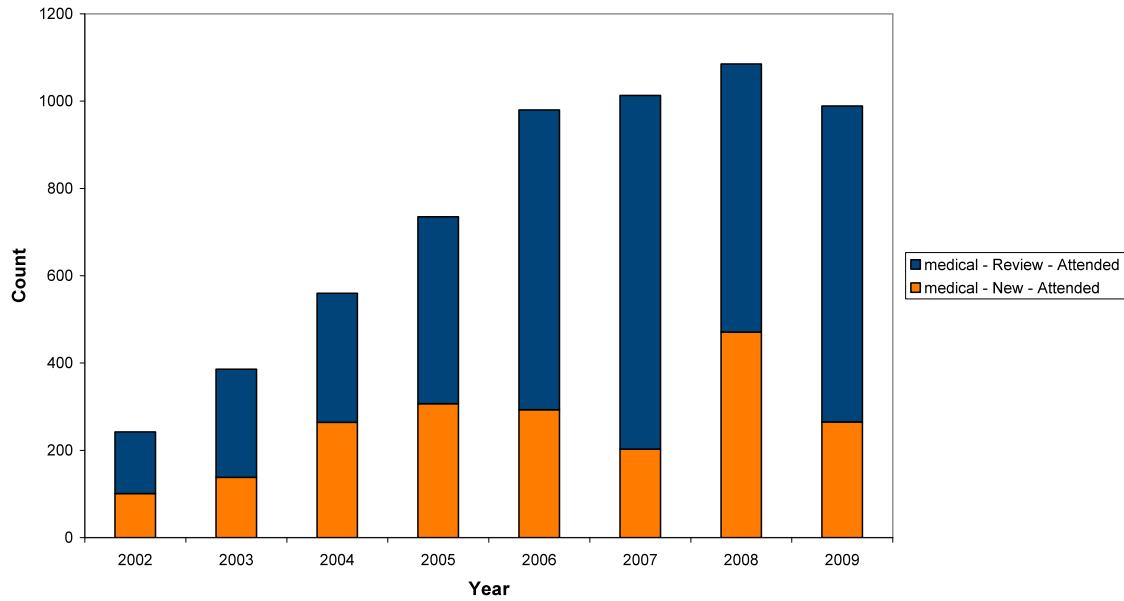
- Clinic attendance remains stable at around 1,000 attendances/year
- Our attendance rate for 2009 has improved further to 87.4%, despite increased patient complexity and diversity
- 60% of our consultations in 2009 required the help of an interpreter; this is lower than previous years
- In 2009, we saw children from more than 35 countries speaking more than 28 languages

Attendance by year



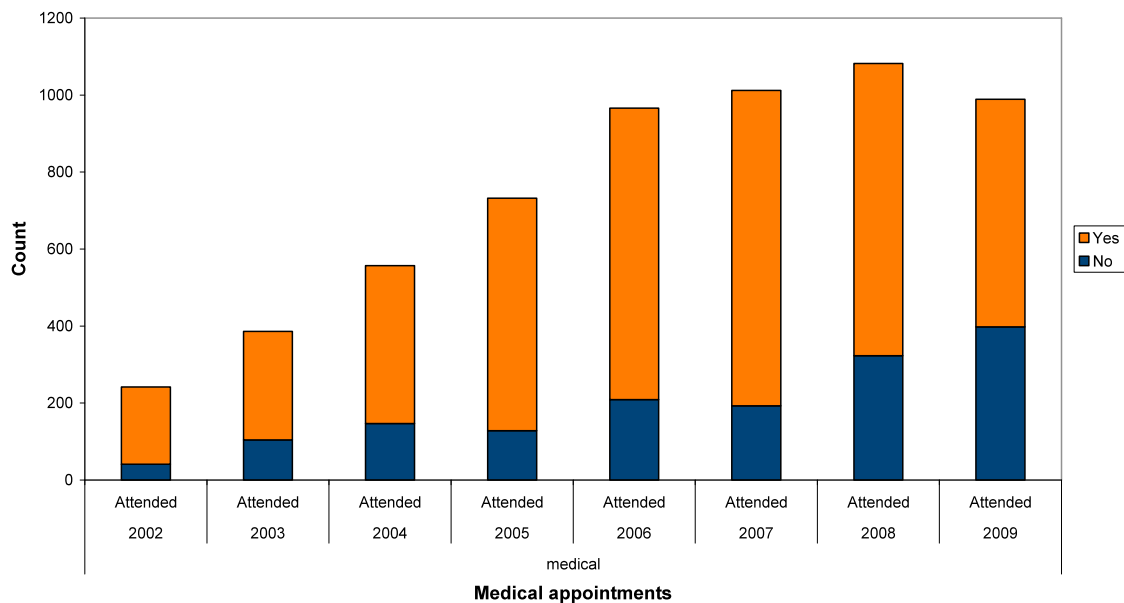
| Clinic Year | Attended | Non attendance | Total booked | Attendance rate |
|-------------|----------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 2002 | 242 | 32 | 274 | 88.3% |
| 2003 | 386 | 126 | 512 | 75.4% |
| 2004 | 560 | 203 | 763 | 73.4% |
| 2005 | 735 | 127 | 862 | 85.3% |
| 2006 | 980 | 258 | 1,238 | 79.2% |
| 2007 | 1,013 | 227 | 1,240 | 81.7% |
| 2008 | 1,085 | 186 | 1,271 | 85.4% |
| 2009 | 989 | 142 | 1,131 | 87.4% |

Appointment type by year (attendances)



| <i>Clinic Year</i> | <i>New (attended)</i> | <i>Review (attended)</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percentage new pts</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 2002 | 101 | 141 | 242 | 42% |
| 2003 | 138 | 248 | 386 | 36% |
| 2004 | 264 | 296 | 560 | 47% |
| 2005 | 307 | 428 | 735 | 42% |
| 2006 | 293 | 687 | 980 | 30% |
| 2007 | 203 | 810 | 1,013 | 20% |
| 2008 | 471 | 614 | 1,085 | 43% |
| 2009 | 265 | 724 | 989 | 27% |

Interpreter use



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