



# Immigrant health service 2011

Department of General Medicine

## **Background**

Australia accepts 13,750 Humanitarian entrants annually, around 3,700 of this group settle in Victoria. Key changes in the demographics of Humanitarian entry over 2011 include: an increased proportion of Humanitarian visas granted to onshore claimants (asylum seekers), with a corresponding decrease in offshore claimants (notably the sponsored 202 visa group) and the use of community detention as an alternative form of mandatory detention. The 4 most frequent countries of origin for offshore Humanitarian entrants were Iraq, Burma, Afghanistan and Bhutan. Countries of origin for people in detention included Afghanistan, Iran and Sri Lanka. Around half the Humanitarian intake is aged < 25 years.

### **Key achievements in 2011**

- **1108 patient contact episodes**
- **Launch of Refugee Status Report – by the Minister for Health and Minister for Early Childhood July 2011. Statewide forum for response to Status Report October 2011**
- **3 publications, 1 accepted for publication, 2 others submitted (includes national position statement on vitamin D in infants, children, adolescents and pregnancy), 3 book chapters in press**
- **3 policy submissions (hepatitis B immunisation and vitamin D)**
- **Involvement in development of guidelines for screening Minors in Detention (DIAC)**
- **5 invited conference presentations**
- **Involvement in advisory committee for Department of Health 10 year Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, and State/National refugee health networks**
- **\$448,000 in research funding (electronic health record, based at University of Melbourne Department of Medicine)**
- **31 Education sessions**
- **Two new clinical guidelines, revision of website/8 guidelines (3000 hits/year)**
- **Revision of Victorian high dose vitamin D guidelines**
- **Commencement of teacher in clinic**
- **Streamlined referrals to Royal Dental Hospital, with excellent patient feedback**
- **Pharmacy audit of quality and safety issues in prescribing**
- **Increased links with service providers for asylum seekers and minors in community detention, and service provision for these groups**
- **Development of electronic health record for specialist outpatient care**

## Service model

The Immigrant health service includes a weekly outpatient clinic, inpatient consultations, telephone and email advice, and affiliations with the Victorian paediatric tuberculosis service, the Department of Gastroenterology and Clinical Nutrition, and the Western Region Health Centre Vitamin D service.

Post arrival refugee health screening now usually occurs in primary care, supported by the Refugee Health Nurses located across Victoria. The RCH Immigrant health clinic has transitioned to acting as a tertiary consultation service for refugee children/young people. In 2011, the RCH Immigrant health clinic saw a shift in demographics, with greater numbers of asylum seekers, increased case complexity, and an ongoing focus on cross-cultural educational and developmental assessment.

## Staff

<i>Position</i>	<i>Staff member</i>	<i>EFT</i>
Clinic coordinator	Helen Milton	0.4
Medical lead	Georgie Paxton	0.2
FFS consultant	Georgie Paxton	0.1
FFS consultant	Andy Smith	varies
FFS consultant	Steve Graham/Dave Burgner	varies
Fellow	Melanie Thompson	0.5
Registrar(s)	Liz Bannister/ Kate McCloskey	0.1
Dental therapist	Tatiana Polizzi	0.05
Community worker	Nagaha Idris	0.05
Volunteers	Elly Woudstra, others	weekly
Research nurse	Katrina Sangster	0.1
Teacher	Barbara Emblin	0.2

## Key points - clinic demographics

- Clinic attendance rates have remained stable at 85%
- There were 758 patient attendances in the Immigrant health clinic in 2011. There were a further 350 patient contacts, predominantly by the fellow, Dr Melanie Thompson, at both the Western Region Health Centre and the TB clinic. There were 39 additional patient consultations (direct and by phone/email).
- We saw children/young people from 31 countries, most commonly Sudan, Somalia, Burma, Ethiopia, Kenya
- We saw families speaking 30 languages, most commonly Somali, Arabic, Dinka, Karen and Chin
- Interpreters were required for 63% of consultations, an increase from 2010

## Affiliated services/work

- Tuberculosis clinic: Dr Melanie Thompson
- Western Region Health Centre refugee clinic: Dr Melanie Thompson/Dr Dave Tickell
- Darebin Community Health Centre: Dr Kate Thomson

- Craigieburn Community Health Centre: Dr Jo Fraser
- Dandenong Hospital Refugee Health Clinic: Dr Danni Bao
- Royal Melbourne Hospital/University of Melbourne Department of Medicine (Windermere Fellowship): Dr Georgie Paxton

## Education/presentations

- 31 education sessions in total (21 GP, 12 MT, 2 combined)
  - 5 conference presentations (GP)
  - 19 external presentations,
  - 3 regional presentations
  - 7 internal sessions (CCCH, FRACP, Nursing, Cultural diversity committee, Immunisation)

## Research grants

- **Department of Industry, Innovation and Regional Development, BEIP round 2.** Refugee health clinical hub – a model for integrated clinical care. \$448,000, cash and in kind \$1,013,000

## Publications and policy submissions

- Paxton GA, Smith N, Win AK, Mulholland N, Hood S. Refugee status report. A report on how refugee children and young people in Victoria are faring. Victorian Government, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Melbourne, 2011. 135 p.
- Paxton GA, Rice J, Davie G, Carapetis JR, Skull SA. East African immigrant children in Australia have poor immunisation coverage. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2011;47:888-92.
- Woodland L, Zwi K, Paxton G, Burgner D. Good practice in addressing the health needs of newly arrived refugee children. *Diversit-e Issue 1* 2011. Available at: [www.dhi.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1513/Woodland.pdf.aspx](http://www.dhi.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1513/Woodland.pdf.aspx)
- Hepatitis B immunisation in refugee Victorians – Department of Health, Victoria, December 2011
- Vitamin D and bone health in children – Osteoporosis Australia, Sydney, October 2011. Submission for national white paper on vitamin D and bone health
- Vitamin D and bone health in pregnancy - Osteoporosis Australia, Sydney, October 2011. Submission for national white paper on vitamin D and bone health
- Colucci E, Minas H, Szwarc J, Paxton G and Guerra C. Barriers to and facilitators of utilisation of mental health services by young people of refugee background. January 2012. Available at: [http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/resources/publications\\_and\\_resources.htm](http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/resources/publications_and_resources.htm)
- Low vitamin D in Victoria. Department of Health Victoria. October 2011. Available from [http://health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/publications/low\\_vitamin\\_d\\_med.htm](http://health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/publications/low_vitamin_d_med.htm)
- *Paxton GA, Sangster KJ, Maxwell EL, McBride CRJ, Drewe RH. Post arrival health screening in Karen refugees in Australia. Submitted for publication December 2011.*

- Paxton GA, Paxton GA, Teale GR, Nowson C, Mason RS, McGrath J, Thompson M, Siafarikas A, Rodda CP and Munns CF. *Vitamin D and health in pregnancy, infants, children and adolescents in Australia and New Zealand: a position statement. Submitted for publication December 2011.*

## **Website**

- Located here: [http://rch.org.au/immigranthealth/index.cfm?doc\\_id=10575](http://rch.org.au/immigranthealth/index.cfm?doc_id=10575)
- 10,000 hits in 3 years to May 2011
- New guideline: Helicobacter pylori,
- New guideline: Birth date issues
- Major revisions of guidelines: Vitamin D, Immunisation, Initial health assessment, Vitamin A, Tuberculosis screening,
- Revisions/updating other guidelines/webpages

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