



GLOBAL SKIN HEALTH

THE CONTINUING CRISIS OF GLOBAL SKIN HEALTH IMPORTANCE: DERMATOLOGICAL DISEASES IN REFUGEES, SEVEN-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE MULTI-CENTER DATA FROM TURKEY

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Introduction: The Syrian crisis is the worst humanitarian crisis of the century. Although skin diseases have been reported among the most common problems in refugees, dermatological epidemiologic studies are lacking.

Objective: To reveal the dermatologic disease profile of the refugees in Turkey to guide health improvement policies and health professionals.

Methods: A multi-center, seven-year retrospective study including eleven hospitals in cities with the most refugees. The electronic records of all dermatology admissions of refugees were used. Means, medians, standard deviations, and percentages, as appropriate, were used to describe demographics, diagnoses, medications, procedures, and inpatient care.

Results: In total, 79.637 admissions – which increased by year – were included. There were





more admissions in the secondary hospitals and cities closer to Syria. The mean age was 24.8 ± 16.45 years. Only 0.6% (n = 509) were inpatients. Cutaneous viral (7.76%) and bacterial (7.65%) infections were common. The rate of scabies infestations was 4.46%, and pediculosis was 0.60%. Cutaneous leishmaniasis was found as 2.78%, but there was no tuberculosis. One patient had leprosy. More than half (52%, n=1555) of the non-dermatologic diagnoses were 'external mortality, injury and poisoning.'

Conclusions: Despite news that the conflict may be ending, admissions continue to increase, probably because of the devastated Syrian health system. The greater proportion are working age adults with a risk of social discrimination and difficulty of finding jobs due to skin disfigurement. Increased infection and infestations indicate poor living conditions, which can be helped through simple cost-effective measures, and by family physicians reducing the burdens of secondary hospitals. Safety is still an issue. Lower hospitalization may indicate patients remaining underserved, which needs to be further researched. Leishmania is still common, but tuberculosis is not unlike general assumptions. This fits the data of WHO. The full results include the widest data to help these vulnerable people.

