Mental Health Services for Syrian Refugees in Turkey
The Role of Technology

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Yale School of Medicine
Department of Psychiatry
Outline

- Background and context
- Online training for Psychological First Aid
- Syrian Telemental Health Network: Capacity building and Tele consultations
Key Figures

12.2M
People in need of humanitarian assistance

4.1M
People who fled the country

7.6M
People internally displaced by violence

Data source: OCHA (as of Sep 2015).
Syria Regional Refugee Response

Total Persons of Concern 4,086,760
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpak (2014)</td>
<td>Cross-sectional survey, adults</td>
<td>Tent-city Turkey</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>PTSD = 33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefee-Bahloul (2014)</td>
<td>Cross-sectional survey, Adults</td>
<td>Kilis, Turkey, urban primary care clinic</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>Psychological stress: 41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Özer (2013)</td>
<td>Cross-sectional survey, Children age (9-18)</td>
<td>Islahiye camp, Turkey</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>Psych-Stress: 46% of girls and 44% of boys</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Depression: 44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marwa 2012, 2013</td>
<td>Cross-sectional, adults</td>
<td>4 refugee camps in Turkey</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>PTSD=61% anxiety=53% Depression= 54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagnosed MH through IMC MHPSS Case Management Teams

Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse Disorders

Medically Unexplained Somatic Complaints

Other Psychological Complaints

Other Disorders

Behavioral Disorders

Developmental Disorders

Psychotic Disorders

Epilepsy

Severe Emotional Disorders

Percentage of Mental Health Disorders by Country

- JORDAN
- TURKEY
- LEBANON
- SYRIA
Diagnosed MH through IMC MHPSS Case Management Teams

- Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse Disorders
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Percentage of Mental Health Disorders by Country:

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To Help Or Not To Help
Principle #1:
Principle #1: Long-term relief
Principle #2: Scalability

Problem

Solution

Scale up!
Principle #3: Implementation

- Act
- Plan
- Study
- Do
UNHCR Response
Who is providing MH services?

- UN Sub-contractor
- Independent
- Others
Who is providing MH services?

UN Sub-contractor

Local with religious affiliation:
AKWS, ICSC

Local civil organizations/NGO
AHSI, DAHGCC, DAW, FPD, GCC,
JHAS, JPA, IMC, JRC, JRF, NHF,
PSTIC

International with religious aff.:
LWF

International NGO:
AVSI, CARE, CVT, FI, HI, IMC, IRC,
JRS, TdH, UNICEF, UPP

International with religious aff.:
OIC

Independent

International NGOs:
MSF, IOM

Syrian-Expatriate Organizations:
SAMS, SEMA, UOSSM

Others

Academic affi groups, individuals,
etc

??
Who is providing MH services?

UN Sub-contractor

- Local with religious affiliation: AKWS, ICSC
- Local civil organizations/NGO: AHSI, DAHGCC, DAW, FPD, GCC, JHAS, JPA, IMC, JRC, JRF, NHF, PSTIC
- International NGO: AVSI, CARE, CVT, FI, HI, IMC, IRC, JRS, TdH, UNICEF, UPP
- International with religious aff.: OIC
- Academic affi groups, individuals, etc
- ??

Independent

- International NGOs: MSF, IOM

Others

- Syrian-Expatriate Organizations: SAMS, SEMA, UOSSM
Kilis, OIC clinic

• Mental health clinic in urban center of the city of Kilis
• The only Syrian MH team granted access to Kilis refugee camps.

• Team: One psychiatrist, three psychologists (now down to 1), and three health care volunteers (now down to 2)
• Workload:
  – 10 patients a day in the urban clinic
  – 20 patients a day in the refugee camps

• War-affected individuals or patients with history of psychiatric hospital,
• Ibn Khaldoun mental hospital in Aleppo that was destroyed during the war.
Challenges

• No funding for the last year.

• No professional staff (But Enthusiastic volunteers!)
PFA Guide for Field Workers

- WHO publication
  www.who.int

- Collaborative effort:
  - World Health Organization
  - War Trauma Foundation
  - World Vision International

- Endorsed by 24 UN/NGO international agencies

- Available in several languages
“Trauma Therapy and Victim Coordination Center And Hospitality”
Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies.

WHO IASC Guidelines
2007
Intervention pyramid

The place of PFA in overall mental health and psychosocial response

Clinical services

Focused psychosocial supports

Strengthening community and family supports

Social considerations in basic services and security

Examples:

Clinical mental health care (whether by PHC staff or by mental health professionals)

Basic emotional and practical support to selected individuals or families, such as Psychological First Aid

Activating social networks
Supportive child-friendly spaces

Advocacy for good humanitarian practice: basic services that are safe, socially appropriate and that protect dignity

Psychological first aid: Facilitator's manual for orienting field workers
## PFA Action Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learn about the crisis event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learn about available services and supports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learn about safety and security concerns.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Look</th>
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<td>• Observe for safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Observe for people with obvious urgent basic needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Observe for people with serious distress reactions.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Listen</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make contact with people who may need support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask about people’s needs and concerns.</td>
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<td>• Listen to people and help them feel calm.</td>
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<th>Link</th>
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<td>• Help people address basic needs and access services.</td>
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<td>• Help people cope with problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Give information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect people with loved ones and social support.</td>
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Tele-PFA training

- 4 sessions (each 90 mins long)
- Followed by weekly supervision sessions
- 3 volunteer workers in Kilis, Turkey
- 2 facilitators in New Haven, CT, USA
- Telecommunication modality: Skype
- Slide show, role play, and case supervision/feedback
- Pre and post test
- Feedback from the volunteers
Sustainability by technology

3rd Oct 2014  Mental health  Human resources for health  Community health workers  Conflict  1 comment

The Lancet Global Health Journal
To read original research articles on The Lancet Global Health journal website click here.

Popular blogs
- Realpolitik and global pandemics
- Encouraging research; promoting equity
- Climate change and the shared responsibility for global health
- Mental health challenge won by Dream-a-World project
- Medical students call for a healthy future

Active discussions
Problem: Lack of professional staff
Solution: PFA training
Scale up?
Udemy/MOOCs

Psychological First Aid

Section 1

Lecture 1: مقدمة: ما هو الإسعاف النفسي الأولي؟
00:59

Quiz 1: الإختيار البسيط: ستر معلومات
17 questions

Lecture 2: ما هو الإسعاف النفسي الأولي؟
03:56

Lecture 3: "متى آتى، و لماذا" تستعمل الإسعاف النفسي الأولي؟
04:28

Lecture 4: دروس العملية على الأفراد
02:21

Lecture 5: ردود الفعل العاطفي علي الأفراد
04:46

Section 2

Mهارات التواصل

Discussions

Search Discussions or Add Discussion

Show Unanswered Discussions

Hussam Jefee-Bahloul posted a discussion 3 days ago

تمرين للنقاش
مرحبا للجميع
شاركنا التمرين الثاني
Student Feedback
Learn what your students are saying about your course through surveys created by Udemy.

19% Needs Work
15 Votes

81% Doing Great
62 Votes

Students Recommend

#1 Cited
Instructor Delivery
Work on your delivery to come across as more engaging, prepared, and/or credible
Learn More

Students Appreciate

#1 Cited
Production Quality
Audio/video is polished and high-quality
Learn More

#2 Cited
Student Expectations
Students are confident the course will help them achieve their learning goals
Learn More

#3 Cited
Clarity & Structure
Explanations are clear and the course is well organized
Learn More
The National Center for Mental Health
NCMH (UOSSM)

Diagram showing the organizational structure of the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) with Arabic labels for positions and departments.
Example 2: NCMH, Reyhanli

- National Center for Mental Health NCMH clinic in Reyhanli (Ryihania), Turkey
- Nonprofit, medical system
- Syria Relief, UOSSM (Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations).
- One psychiatrist and 4 B.A. level Syrian psychologists.
- March 2014: treated 111 patients, including 28 new cases.
NCMH, Reyhanli

- The center provides individual and group psychotherapy and medication management services, and an array of training courses.

- Funding: UOSSM and Syria Relief (Financially stable)

- Partnership: SYRIAN Science association, DRC, IRC, MSF-Belgium, SERA.

- The team at NCMH and UOSSM is actively building other MH clinics in Turkey, and providing MH services to primary care clinics inside Syria.
Challenges?

- Lack of access to specialists (psychiatrists and clinically trained psychologists)
- On the job training and continuing education
Use of telepsychiatry in areas of conflict: the Syrian refugee crisis as an example

Telepsychiatry has been used to increase access to mental health services for underserved populations (including ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees) within-borders and across borders and is underutilized in conflict settings.

In three years, the Syrian conflict has led to millions of refugees and displaced people. In December 2013, there were over 1.3 million refugees registered in Jordan and an estimated 4.2 million in Syria living in urban areas. Little is known about the mental health services available to Syrian refugees and how they compare to those who are not living in conflict zones.

Telemental health in the Middle East: overcoming the barriers

Hussam Jefee-Bahloul*

Department of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, CT, USA
Pilot Assessment and Survey of Syrian Refugees’ Psychological Stress and Openness to Referral for Telepsychiatry (PASSPORT Study)

Hussam Jefee-Bahloul, MD, Moustafa K. Moustafa, Fatma M. Shebl, MD, PhD, and Andres Barkil-Oteo, MD, MSc

1Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut.
2Yale School of Public Health, New Haven, Connecticut.

MH services for refugees and other underserved populations. The acceptance of telepsychiatry by refugees and other underserved populations has been reported by Mucic. Some of the patient population, Mucic were from Arabic-speaking regions (e.g., Morocco). However, little is known about Syrian refugee readiness to accept telepsychiatry. This study aimed to assess the willingness of Syrian refugees to accept a telepsychiatry intervention and to identify potential factors that influence their willingness.
Survey of Primary Clinic sample

- Prevalence of psychological stress: 42% positive

- Acceptability For Psychiatric Care: 34% expressed the need to see a psychiatrist

- Acceptability to get services through Telepsychiatry: 46% (of those agreed to psychiatric care)

- Lessons learned: Bilingual, security issues
Survey of Syrian Health Care Workers

General practitioners (non mental health specialists) n=30 from different Syrian cities surveyed

Three quarters (77%) believed that their patients would benefit from a Telemental health consultation

Jefee-Bahloul & Barkil 2015
**Collegium Telemedicus** is an informal organization to assist people who wish to start and operate telemedicine networks to deliver health care in resource settings.

A common scenario is that one or more doctors visit colleagues in a developing country, usually to conduct teaching and training. Recognising the need for obtaining specialist opinions there, they offer to support their colleagues by email on their return. Email support is duly provided, but proves not entirely satisfactory (confidentiality concerns, difficult to organise the right person to respond, no audit trail, etc). Establishing a formal telemedicine network, but the initial start-up cost is a deterrent.

**Collegium Telemedicus** offers a new approach. There is no start-up fee (although we reserve the right to invite a donation towards running costs at an early stage). The software is made available on a secure server and can be accessed using any web browser.

- About
- Contact
- Further information
How did technology help in NCMH:

- Piloting phase
- Registered field clinicians <-> specialists
- It is a “non-live” mean of communication (i.e. asynchronous).
- Using the Collegium Telemedicus system as a delivery platform. (has been used by NGOs such as Medicines Sans Frontiers MSF)

Feedback:
- Advise too general → Creating better form
- Advise too theoretical → Feedback to specialists
- Need lectures → Started clinical lecture series
Problem: Lack of access to specialists

Solution: Tele Consultations

Scale up?
Syrian Telemental Health Network
• Staff on the ground: 35
• Experts: 14
• Patients seen: 49
• Clinics: 7

• Addition of Continuing education and training section/ Bi-Weekly lectures
Mobility... adaptability ... and more

- Europe refugee crisis
- Need for cross-cultural capacity
- Need for cross-cultural consultations
- Need for research collaborations
Culture, Context and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Syrians

A Review for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Staff Working with Syrians Affected by Armed Conflict

2015