

Determinants of mental health and wellbeing for young migrant women and young migrant populations: a scoping review.

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24% of migrant populations worldwide are children and young people¹.

Current evidence suggests an increased prevalence of poorer wellbeing and mental health in migrant populations compared to native born². This results from vulnerabilities, individual characteristics, circumstances and migration experiences³. The impact of different factors and determinants of health changes over time, generally with good physical health at migration but development of poor and unhealthy lifestyles, poor wellbeing and poor mental health over time⁴.

Methods

We wanted to understand what factors underlie these issues, particularly for young migrant women but also things that would apply to all. Working with two young women lived experience advisors, we did two things:

Work package 1: A scoping review to understand key determinants of mental health and wellbeing for young migrants, in particular, young migrant women.

- Experienced librarian created the search
- Wide range of databases and grey-literature
- Narrative synthesis
- Article criteria:

Jan 2000 – Apr 2022

Relevant to young migrant women, adolescents or young people aged 4-24.

Considers determinants of mental health and wellbeing

High income countries of European values

DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
21 articles identified as eligible



Work package 2: Qualitative interviews with young migrant women, stakeholders and professionals who support young migrants

We interviewed 8 young migrant women from Kent, Surrey or Sussex who had moved to the UK in the last 2-5 years. We also spoke to professionals and stakeholders who support migrant communities. The populations interviewed are shown below:

Young Migrant women interviewed

Participant demographics	Number
Living location	
Kent	6
Surrey	0
Sussex	3
Number of years in the UK	
Less than 5 years	3
5-10 years	4
More than 10 years	2
Ethnicity	
Asian	1
Turkish	1
Black African	4
Mixed	2
White	1
Religion	
None	2
Christianity	6
Missing	1
Education level	
In college	1
At University	4
In school	2
None of the above	2
Refugee/asylum seeker	
Yes	2
No	7

Stakeholders/professionals interviewed

Participant demographics	Number
Employing organisational role	
Charity sector	6
Health care provider	6
Higher education	2
Location of employment	
Kent	8
Surrey	3
Sussex	2
Missing	2
Experience working with migrant communities	
None directly	3
Less than 5 years	1
5-10 years	3
10-15 years	1
>15 years	1
Missing	5



What did we find?

The results of the scoping review found key determinants as risk or protective factors of mental health and wellbeing for young migrants

Things that **protect** mental health and wellbeing

- Time – mental health is poorer closer to migration time.
- Secure ethnic identity and good self-esteem.
- Good knowledge of new country language.
- Family support
- Good relationships at school with peers.
- Access to sports/physical activities.
- Diversity and support in local community.
- **Good school support, performance & belonging feelings**

Things that **risk** mental health and wellbeing

- **Country of origin – large cultural differences.**
- Pre-migration experiences.
- Resettlement stress post-migration.
- **Lack of family cohesion and issue with family functioning.**
- Experiencing bullying.
- Lack of school ethnic diversity and social support.
- **Discrimination in communities and society.**
- Lack of equal access to health care.



Particular to young women in **dark pink**

Support for those who experience **forced migration**

- Community support for living arrangements.
- Poor socioeconomic conditions.
- Availability and use of health resources.
- Inadequate housing, including lack of privacy.
- Insecurity about refugee status.
- Discrimination.

Thematic analysis of interviews with our lived experience advisors produced five main themes (in blue) that might better support young women in particular, but relevant to all migrant populations:

"you kind of need to constantly prove and explain yourself, and explain yourself again and again and again sometimes is exhausting"
Young Migrant Woman 5

Early support is helpful

"Child services is very defined, adult services is very defined, the gap is in between, for the 18 to 25"
Professional 6

"having a mentor, that did help me so much"
Young Migrant Woman 2

Support needs development and joining up

Society and communities need to be more welcoming

It takes time to find a new identity and be understood

"a lot of people oddly enough think it's okay to be quite blatantly racist to your face"
You Migrant 6

Existing services need to understand us

"being minorities all together we've all kind of felt empowered in a sense of that now we can all be like ourselves and we will be accepted the way we are"
Professional 3

"We need to have that kind of understanding in services we're providing to understand cultural ways ... and custom"
Professional 3

Conclusion

Overall, young migrants are resilient and thrive through migration experiences. However, there is a low level of consistent evidence on factors that influence mental health and wellbeing in young migrant populations, particularly for young women. Vulnerable groups experience the poorest mental health and wellbeing such as young women, forced migrants and unaccompanied minors.

With this information, we created a **logic model** to inform services:



The **project website** has further reports and a video summary co-produced with our public advisors:



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