

Symposium | Imigrant, Refugee : [Symposium 63] Rethinking Mental Health Support for Refugees

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Room 3 (Large Hall A)

[Symposium 63] Rethinking Mental Health Support for Refugees

Moderator: Simon Groen (De Evenaar Center for Transcultural Psychiatry), Hans Rohlof (Mental Care Center)

[SY-63-03] Victimmigration, a longitudinal study of refugees suffering from stress and trauma in Greece and the Netherlands

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The research focuses on the psychological impact of victimization among migrants and refugees, a process termed "victimmigration," which encompasses traumatic experiences before, during, and after migration. This study investigates how such victimization affects psychological well-being and how migration policies and asylum procedures might influence these outcomes. The research consists of two complementary studies: Victimmigration I and II. **Victimmigration I** examines victimization in the post-migration phase in the Netherlands. It follows 200 migrants and refugees from Syria and Iraq over one year using a mixed-methods design. The study includes qualitative interviews and digital open-ended questions, as well as quantitative digital questionnaires. Additionally, it tests the effectiveness of a simple smartphone-based intervention — playing Tetris — aimed at improving psychological well-being and preventing psychological complaints. A randomized controlled trial will compare outcomes between an intervention group and a control group. **Victimmigration II** mirrors the design of the first study but focuses on the peri-migration phase, tracking the same number and profile of migrants during and after their journey from Greece. The same mixed-method approach and Tetris intervention are applied to assess victimization experiences and psychological resilience during migration. The expected outcome of both studies is to determine whether low-threshold digital interventions can enhance the psychological well-being of migrants and refugees. The research aims to generate empirical data on the effects of victimization throughout different migration phases, informing evidence-based migration and asylum policies. These insights can help policymakers better understand how pre-, peri-, and post-migration experiences affect mental health and potentially reduce further victimization through more humane and psychologically informed procedures and reception conditions.