



IOM International Organization for Migration

**Enhancing IOM  
Refugee Mental Health  
Assessment Programme (mHAP)**

**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

September 30, 2018

*A collaboration  
among the IOM,  
the CDC and WSI*



# Thank You...

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We are grateful to our project funders and partners- the Centers for Disease Control and the International Office of Migration (IOM). We also thank IOM field staff, medical students and refugee communities for their support and contribution to this project.



This Executive Summary was prepared by WSI © 2018

*War Survivors Institute WSI is an international, U.S. based organization that works to restore whole health to those harmed by war, conducts projects to promote mutuality and prevent violent conflict, and provides education and training*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was commissioned by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) with collaboration and funding support from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC). War Survivors Institute (WSI) was contracted to partner with IOM/CDC to enhance mental health screening for refugees who are in the pre-departure stage with the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). The pilot development site was in Kampala/Hoima, Uganda.

The primary project goals were to enhance screening and treatment options for mental, neurological, and substance use conditions (MNS) during pre-departure health screenings, enhance communication of screening and diagnostic results and need for care to the U.S. resettlement community, and make recommendations for additions/changes to the IOM biodata documentation process to reflect enhanced screening, detection, and communication.

Key findings, observations, and outcomes during the project were:

1. A three-tiered screening/detection process (“enhanced screening”) was developed and successfully implemented at the pilot site. Enhanced screening was developed to be both sensitive to detect possible cases and specific to find cases of significant severity to warrant clinical intervention. IOM clinicians note improvement in screening and detecting cases that would otherwise go undetected.
2. Panel physicians, nurses and healthcare workers/interpreters that received capacity building and training developed by WSI report improvements to their overall Mental Health Assessment Skills. (See Final Report).
3. Use of enhanced screening identified an estimate of 3.5% of 715 cases with probable psychiatric disorders requiring care.
4. Use of enhanced screening identified 3.4% of 715 cases with substance abuse requiring further evaluation and/or intervention.
5. Use of enhanced screening identified only 3 of 715 cases with harmful behavior requiring further evaluation and/or intervention.
6. Some discrepancies in data collected indicating the need to “tighten” and clarify parts of the enhanced screening process.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7. A training manual for IOM staff along with a PDF of training material was developed and is being distributed to IOM USRAP. The manual includes background information about the project and the manual, the enhanced screening protocol with the three tier forms and instructions for use, an overview about the initial questions using the mhGAP for the panel physicians, and suggested Roles and Responsibilities for each type of healthcare worker involved in the enhanced screening.
8. Recommendations for changes to the Terms of Reference for consulting psychiatrists and additions to IOM biodata documentation were provided.

## **Recommendations**

WSI was pleased to help train IOM staff in Uganda about enhancing screening and care for the mental health of refugees. IOM staff enjoyed improved knowledge and capacity for assessment. Our primary recommendations include:

- Continuation of enhanced screening at pilot site to improve process
- Additions to the Terms of Reference for consulting psychiatrists to enhance their functions during screening and assessment
- Additions to the IOM biodata to help accurate transfer of medical information during and after migration
- Expansion of 3-tiered enhanced screening and services for mental disorders and emotional distress (referred to as MNS) for pre-departure refugees
  - Continued training to core IOM group in Uganda,
  - Expansion of training by WSI and/or IOM trainers to other sites

## **Conclusions**

Three-tiered enhanced screening is feasible, improves detection of MNS conditions, and is acceptable and desired by IOM Staff. Enhanced screening also improves information for consulting psychiatrists decision making and provides succinct information for enhancing the IOM biodata for communicating medical/psychiatric information for traveling and resettlement. There is need for continued improvement and expansion of enhanced screening.

## PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

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We are grateful to colleagues who have collaborated and partnered to support this project.

WSI acknowledges the following contributors for their program support:

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## WAR SURVIVORS INSTITUTE

War Survivors Institute was established in 2016 by a dedicated group of clinicians, researchers, and health administrators to honor the resilience and strength of all war survivors. We help survivors heal and continue to be a beacon of hope shining light through the darkness of war.

WSI also works to promote mutuality and reduce violent conflict around the world while teaching a new generation of students.

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