A FOCUS ON PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

A Panel presentation at the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Presented by: Sebastian Ssempijja, PhD
In a Panel Discussion with Dr. Jim Sanders, Medical College of Wisconsin
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Children and adolescents are:

- Targeted by combatants
- Recruited to the combatants
- Witness and are exposed to and are victimized by violence
- Are used to propagate violence
- Left unattended by responsible adults
- Lose social and protective guidance and care

The focus on the refugee/immigrant children and adolescent in the USA includes:

- Pre-migration medical screening and clearance, as it is for adults and discussed by Dr. Sanders
- Post-migration early screening have a protocol as discussed by Dr. Sanders
- Screening for Mental Health for children are proposed, and need more attention
- Early detection of Mental Health and behavioral concerns
- Current awareness about adverse childhood experiences (ACES) informs the anticipated needs

Relevance of the forum to the current geopolitical realities on Refugee-immigrant needs

- The academy’s mission and objective in relation to child welfare
- Premising war and violence to children as a Public Health Risk Factor
- War and violence directly threaten Health and Well-being for all.

- The majority of the world’s children never receive protection as refugees
- This human catastrophe is lost to the world conscience

- Vulnerability to PTSD, Depression and Anxiety Disorders among Refugee and immigrant children are significant
- Toxic Stress for refugee/immigrant children
Our clinic’s experience in serving Children and Adolescents
- Prevalence of ADHD, 30-35%
- Depression 20-25%
- Agency total annual service is 700-800 children
- Adjustment disorders with mixed emotions and conduct 25-30%
- Psychotic disorders < 5%
- Substance use disorders - 40% of all adolescents
- The majority of refugees/immigrant children suffer from adjustment disorders
- Refugee/immigrant children are 10-15% of total youths case load

Family wellness and support
- Presents as best protective factor for well-being
- Psycho social support for the children and adults
- Ethnic community based organizations
- Faith based organizations
- School relevance and support
- Cultural linguistic awareness

Affirms the roles of integrated Behavioral Health and medicines
- Our agency is co-located in Primary Health and Medicine
- Encouraging PCPs to be comfortable about managing psychotic picture medications
- Being open to consulting with other non-medical and Behavioral Health care providers

The premise of caring for the pediatrician and the team, per the Harvard program on Refugee Health tool kit
- Caring for the Healer

Conclusion and Discussion
- Thanks and keep paging Team members