



Health service needs and access

Key findings



~8 200

persons from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection in Slovenia as of November 2022

87%

are women and children



Here, it is a GP who makes all decisions. In Ukraine, with my family doctor, I can...insist that I need a specialist. Here you can insist on nothing...

Man, age 69

EMERGING ISSUES

Challenges accessing routine healthcare services

Lack of health insurance

Language barrier for older people

Out-of-pocket payments

Dental services



DRIVERS TO ACCESS SERVICES

Positive individual experiences

Personal experiences with high quality services, positive doctor attitudes, printed summaries of appointments and cleanliness of premises increase trust in the system.

Support from civil society

Organizations like Slovenian
Philanthropy, Red Cross and the
Pro Bono centre provide strong
support for accessing health services;
individual citizens help by scheduling
appointments, driving to the hospital
and translating.



BARRIERS TO ACCESS SERVICES

Pathways to routine care

Emergency services are the most common entry point but do not easily link people to referrals for routine care.



Language

Language is a barrier for many when scheduling appointments and seeing a doctor, especially for those 50+ and who don't speaking English or Slovenian.



Dentistry

Dental services in particular are considered too expensive for Ukrainians in Slovenia.



Temporary status

Some doctors provide only temporary solutions, suggesting people should finish the issue in Ukraine with their doctor.



BEHAVIOURS & ATTITUDES

Basic access

Citizens of Ukraine are entitled to emergency health care as refugees and it is not always clear what this includes or how to access health insurance to receive more services.

Informal communication

Communication with relatives, friends and local people is the main source of information about medical services in Slovenia.

Travel to Ukraine

Some consult Ukrainian doctors online or return to Ukraine to purchase medicines.

Mental health

Many are unaware of mental health services and others choose not to use them, often saying that recent arrivals need it more; group sessions are less attractive and young people find few services.

Background and next steps

BACKGROUND



Ongoing war drives people away

War in Ukraine has resulted in the largest movement of people across Europe since WW2. Neighbouring countries opened borders and offered services, but refugee perspectives are essential for planning appropriate interventions and policies.

METHOD

Qualitative study on perceived health service needs as well as drivers and barriers to accessing these services, conducted in September-October 2022

21 in-depth online interviews::

- 18 were women, and 3 were men
- 16 between ages 18-49, 5 over 50
- 15 people taking care of others;
- 6 people are not caretakers

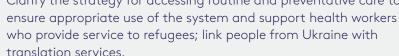
Recruitment via social media channels and personal networks.

Follow up interviews with 15 refugees in January 2023 to understand how their situation had changed.



PROPOSED ACTION

Increase appropriate use of health services Clarify the strategy for accessing routine and preventative care to





Praise and support citizens and civil society organizations Acknowledge the important role of the host community, volunteers,



healthcare workers and civil society organizations through media stories, joint social and cultural events.







Tailor mental health services and ensure people are aware of them.

Consider offering mental health services in new ways to address barriers, such as sites exclusively for Ukrainian refugees, engaging Ukrainian mental health professionals and tailoring services for older people and teenagers.



Well, I say [psychological assistance] is always needed because of the constant stress... If you left, then you physically somehow survived, but psychologically, you are still under stress.

Woman, age 50

Learn more

This briefing note is part of a qualitative study among Ukrainian refugees in Slovenia. For more information, contact:

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Photo on the cover:

Olga, a 20-year-old medical student who fled Ukraine due to the war, was photographed near the Romanian border.

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