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**Relationship between violence and mental health in the Afghan refugees: Plight of the Internally Displaced Person (IDP)****Fawad Kaiser**

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**Statement of the Problem:** Inside Afghanistan, thousands have become internally displaced. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) are at a greater risk for physical and mental health problems. Pakistan, home to 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees and some 700,000 undocumented Afghans, resulting in significant personal, social and economic cost and the impact of all three may have on their mental health. Studies have investigated relationship factors between mental health of displaced person and refugee person. Relationships might include relationships between individuals, groups and communities. In a study with a 30-month follow-up, PTSD, depression and somatic complaints reduced with time in internally displaced and non-displaced children, but psycho-social adaptation did not improve in displaced children and remained worst with time. The relationships between violence and health need further investigation, might it be the impact of war on mental health or the impact of family relationships, physical abuse and early adversities. The purpose of this study is to describe the experience of IDP Afghan Refugees seeking help for mental health disorders.

**Method:** A review of individual, family, community and societal risk and protective factors for mental health among Afghan refugees who are settled as Internally Displaced Person in Pakistan.

**Findings:** Exposure to violence was found to be a key risk factor, whereas stable settlement and social support in the host country have a positive effect on the mental health and well-being.

**Conclusion:** Timely, but fair and thorough assessment and resolution of refugee status had positive effect on mental health. Early intervention access for mental and physical health and provision for good housing and schooling were central to adjusting and positive mental health. Further research is needed to enquire into the effects of prolonged uncertainty about refugee status which seems to have a negative effect on mental health. Since mental health problems originating among refugees in forced migration are often long lasting, recommendations are made that host countries must implement immigration, health-care and social policies that support IDP family units and keep deleterious consequences for mental health to a minimum.

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