



Models of Child Health Appraised

(A Study of Primary Healthcare in 30 European countries)

Restricted health care entitlements for child migrants in Europe and Australia

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Abstract

Background

More than 300 000 asylum seeking children were registered in Europe alone during 2015. In this study, we examined entitlements for health care for these and other migrant children in Europe and Australia in a framework based on United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Methods

Survey to child health professionals, NGO's and European Ombudspersons for Children in 30 EU/EEA countries and Australia, supplemented by desktop research of official documents. Migrant children were categorised as asylum seekers and irregular/undocumented migrants.

Results

Five countries (France, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Spain) explicitly entitle all migrant children, irrespective of legal status, to receive equal health care to that of its nationals. Sweden and Belgium entitle equal care to asylum seekers and irregular non-EU migrants, while entitlements for EU migrants are unclear. Twelve European countries have limited entitlements to health care for asylum seeking children, including Germany that stands out as the country with the most restrictive health care policy for migrant children. In Australia entitlements for health care are restricted for asylum seeking children in detention and for irregular migrants. The needs of irregular migrants from other EU countries are often overlooked in European health care policy.

Conclusion

Putting pressure on governments to honour the obligations of the UNCRC and explicitly entitle all children equal rights to health care can be an important way of advocating for better access



to primary and preventive care for asylum seeking and undocumented children in Australia and the EU.

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