

# Barriers to care for resettled refugees

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Despite facing complex health and social problems, many permanently resettled refugees struggle to access primary health care that matches their needs.

Barriers to health care for refugees who have been resettled in the Australian community remains an issue that requires a health service overhaul, a Monash University-led report has found.

The study found that Australia lacks a consistent model for delivering accessible and coordinated [primary health care](#) to [refugees](#), with access to care compromised by limited refugee focused health services, a lack of familiarity with the health system, financial hardship and the affordability of healthcare services, and language and cultural barriers.

Monash University's Professor Grant Russell, Director of the Southern Academic Primary Care Research Unit (SAPCRU), led an international team of refugee health experts to conduct new research in developing a framework for the delivery of accessible and coordinated [primary health](#) care for refugees living in Australia and internationally.

Professor Russell said despite facing complex health and social problems, many permanently resettled refugees struggle to access primary health care that matches their needs.

"Permanently resettled refugees in Australia face profound and complex health and social problems," Professor Russell said.

"Despite this, there are serious inadequacies in our current health care system, particularly barriers to accessing care, language barriers impinging communication with health professionals, lack of information and poor understanding of Australia's health system.

"Refugees often fall through the gaps because services delivering focused primary health care to these vulnerable people are not well coordinated with each other or with mainstream health care services.

"Without new health service frameworks, these inadequacies could become more pronounced as Australia continues to resettle large numbers of refugees every year."

Funded by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI), the team reviewed Australian and international literature, interviewed key health, social welfare and community informants, and surveyed Australian refugee health and wellbeing experts to identify the gaps within current health care service delivery to this vulnerable population.

Recommendations for an enhanced model of primary health care for refugees were suggested for policy implementation.

The recommendations encourage an approach where resettled refugees receive an initial six months of care from refugee focused primary health care services, support mainstream primary [health care services](#) to lead the provision of continuing [health care](#) for refugees, use health case managers, engage qualified interpreters, and is delivered to refugees at low or no cost with support by Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

**More information:** For the complete list of recommendations and to access the full report, see: [sapcru.org/services/coordinate ... h-care-for-refugees/](https://sapcru.org/services/coordinate...h-care-for-refugees/)

Provided by Monash University

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