

# Refugees aren't getting needed surgeries

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(HealthDay)—Millions of refugees aren't getting the surgery they need, researchers report.

"When planning to take care of [refugees](#), much thought is put into how to house and feed and clothe people who are far from home for circumstances often beyond their control. But surgery is a basic need and nobody talks about this," said Dr. Adam Kushner, leader of a new study conducted at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

An analysis of data from the United Nations and other sources estimates that the roughly 60 million refugees worldwide may need at least 2.8 million surgeries a year. But their circumstances make it difficult to receive that type of [medical care](#), the researchers added.

The types of surgeries required range from broken bones and hernia repair to cesarean sections, cleft lips, [gallbladder removal](#) and burn care, the study found.

The findings highlight a situation few governments and humanitarian aid agencies plan for when preparing to deal with large numbers of refugees, the researchers said.

"We are facing the largest forced migration crisis since World War II," Kushner said in a Hopkins news release.

"While surgery is a critical component of health care, it is often neglected in times of crisis. Without access to timely and safe surgery, many people will become disabled and many will die—outcomes that could have been prevented," he said.

Many types of surgical care are easy to do and very cost-effective, he added.

Reasons why refugees have trouble getting necessary [surgery](#) include lack of proper documentation and high costs or poor surgical

infrastructure in their host country, the researchers noted.

The findings were published May 25 in the *World Journal of Surgery*.

**More information:** The World Health Organization has more on [refugees](#).

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