

**The mental health effects of trauma among newly arrived refugee children and their mothers:  
Impact on developmental progress****Anne Mantini**

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We explored the mental health effects of war trauma, torture, gender-based violence and community conflict as reported by 980 refugees newly arrived mother-child dyads in Toronto, Canada. A mixed-method study design formed the basis for evaluation of patterns of mental health symptoms and trauma exposure. We used ethnocultural methodologies to inform 6 culture-specific focus groups with refugees and their children from around the world, and quantitative assessment of mental health symptoms in children and their mothers. Participants described complex relationships in the degrees of mental health distress and development informed by political context, war, gender-based violence in their communities, observation of symptoms, cultural themes, and daily functional impairments in the children and adolescents. Recommendations for health care providers include mental health assessment processes that inquire about developmental symptoms in their political and cultural context, the degree of distress as it is culturally conceptualized, and its effect on functioning of the mother-child dyad. Findings confirm the cross-cultural recognition of symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress disorder; however, refugees described significant cultural variation in trauma exposure and impact of mental health concerns on their mother-child relationships.

**Biography**

Dr. Anne Mantini is a Scientist in the Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute at St. Michael's Hospital. She holds a PhD from the Department of Psychology with a speciality in Measurement & Evaluation, at the University of Toronto. Her training and experience spans both research and clinical areas, including developmental psychopathology, risk/resilience, equitable, early intervention, access to health care, and vulnerable population development.

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