



## SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

April 2022

### How is migrant status related to schizophrenia?

The term “migrant” usually refers to first generation migrants; people with a foreign birth place, however some studies also include their locally-born offspring, or second generation migrants. Any association found between migrant status and increased risk of schizophrenia has stimulated a great deal of research and explanatory hypotheses, including the stress relating to migration and settling into a new country, and possible issues with discrimination. Other explanations include a tendency for at-risk individuals to migrate, and differences in underlying genetic vulnerability across cultures.

### What is the evidence regarding migration as a risk factor for schizophrenia?

Moderate quality evidence finds increased incidence and prevalence of schizophrenia in migrants compared to native-born individuals. The risk remains after adjusting for age, sex, and socio-economic status. The increased incidence was found in people who migrated between infancy and adolescence, but not during early adulthood (19-29 years).

There was a medium-sized, increased risk of non-affective psychosis (including schizophrenia) in refugees compared to native-born people, a small to medium-sized increased risk of non-affective psychosis in non-refugee migrants compared to native-born people, and small increased risk of non-affective psychosis in refugees than in non-refugee migrants.

There was increased incidence of schizophrenia in both first and second generation migrants, particularly in migrants from developing countries and in migrants with black skin. There was a large increased risk of schizophrenia in black Caribbean and black African migrants and their descendants in the UK compared to the white British population. Asian migrants in the UK show a medium-sized increased risk of schizophrenia compared to the white British-born population.

For more information see the technical table



*NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.*

*Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.*

*Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.*

*While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.*

### HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

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