

23. DANI PSIHOLOGIJE U ZADRU  
23<sup>rd</sup> PSYCHOLOGY DAYS IN ZADAR

KNJIGA SAŽETAKA  
BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



26. - 28. svibnja 2022.

Odjel za psihologiju  
Sveučilište u Zadru

Department of Psychology  
University of Zadar

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES AMONG ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

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After the massive migration flow through south-eastern Europe in 2015, many people have continued to flee from war, poverty, and prosecution using the same route over the following years. In the last five years, the number of people that expressed to seek asylum in the Republic of Serbia ranges from 2306 to 12937, while app. 226 submitted asylum applications on average per year. The number of people who received international protection in the past 5 years in the Republic of Serbia is low - app. 23 a year. From 2017, PIN has initiated the practice of conducting psychological assessment for refugees in the asylum procedure with the goal of introducing a trauma-informed approach in the asylum procedure by highlighting the potential effects of traumatic experiences on one's current psychological state including difficulties as well as strengths and capacities. The aim of this study is to explore the rate of psychological vulnerabilities among asylum seekers who have submitted asylum applications in the Republic of Serbia, and underwent psychological assessment from 2017 to 2021. A total of 60 participants (70% male, Mage = 28.07, SDage = 9.03) completed the Refugee Health Screener (RHS-15), a 15-item instrument screening emotional distress in refugees. Participants were refugees from 15 countries, but mostly from Afghanistan (25.9%), Burundi (17.2%), and Iran (13.8%). Results indicated that 36.7%, 23.3%, and 25% of participants experienced extreme symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), respectively. Furthermore, only 15% had no psychological difficulties, while 43.3% were assessed as vulnerable, and 41.7% as highly vulnerable. Nevertheless, the results indicated that asylum seekers' coping capacities remained notably high, with about half of the participants (51.7%) stating that they are able to cope with anything or most things. However, 13.3% of the participants stated that they are not able to cope with anything or most things. The study highlights the vulnerabilities of this population and the importance of providing a comprehensive model of support during the asylum procedure.

**Ključne riječi / Keywords:** asylum seekers, symptoms of depression, symptoms of anxiety, symptoms of PTSD, coping capacities