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MENTAL HEALTH OF  
REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS  
IN NEW ZEALAND

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts in Psychology  
at Massey University

Regina Pernice

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## A B S T R A C T

A survey of available literature on mental health status of refugees and immigrants has indicated that this population is at risk for anxiety and depression. The aim of the present study was to identify pre- and post-migratory factors related to self-reported symptoms of anxiety and depression and to investigate differences in psychological functioning among migrants in New Zealand. Goldlust and Richmond's (1974) multivariate model of the immigrant adaptation process, Sluzki's (1986) model of the migratory process and Murphy's (1977) circumstances of migration were tested. 129 Indochinese refugees, 57 Pacific Island immigrants and 63 British immigrants to New Zealand were surveyed. A questionnaire and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25 (HSCL-25), in English and in three Indochinese translations, were administered face-to-face. All respondents were over 18 years of age and had arrived in New Zealand within the last 15 years. The findings suggested that post-migratory factors distinguish between refugees and immigrants and were related to levels of depression and anxiety. Pre-migratory characteristics were not associated with symptom levels. The study confirmed that circumstances of migration (Murphy, 1977) affect symptom levels. However, Sluzki's (1986) model of the migratory process tended to be contradicted, as refugees and immigrants did not experience a symptom free period in New Zealand. Goldlust and Richmond's multivariate model was generally confirmed. Recommendations for future research and the practical implications of the study were discussed.

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