

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

Research Agenda-Setting Paper

This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.

Working Group Name:

Refugees and Internally-Displaced Persons (IDPs) in COVID-19

Working Group Description:

There are approximately 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide including 41.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and 25.9 million refugees. Refugees are people who crossed an international border to find safety from war, violence, or conflict. Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed international borders. They remain under the protection of their own government even if their government is the cause of displacement. In both cases, humanitarian assistance is complex, making both populations among the most vulnerable. The purpose of this Working Group is to examine pandemic preparedness and response relative to refugees/IDPs.

Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

The purpose of this Working Group is to examine pandemic preparedness and response relative to refugees/IDPs across three key areas: *Research*, *Practice*, and *Policy*. The *Research* aspect will conduct an academic literature review of pandemic preparedness and response to examine how academia has contributed to pandemic preparedness and response with emphasis on refugees/IDPs. The *Practice* area will examine practical guidelines and recommendations released before-and-after the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). Guidelines from leading agencies (i.e. WHO, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United Nations (UN), etc.) will be considered. Additionally, guidelines and recommendations from non-governmental organizations and humanitarian response organizations (i.e., the American Red Cross) will be examined to determine their approaches to pandemic preparedness and response before and after COVID-19 with an emphasis on refugees/IDPs. Finally, practical guidelines and measures from countries hosting refugees/IDPs will be considered. The *Policy* approach will focus on global policies and resolutions regarding pandemic preparedness and response. These policies will include United States laws, global resolutions, and political/theoretical frameworks (i.e., the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction) that are adopted globally to examine their approaches to pandemic preparedness and response with specificity towards refugees/IDPs.

Specific aims include (a) examining the inclusion of refugees/IDPs in pandemic preparedness and response initiatives and (b) COVID-19 responses and approaches which specifically target refugees/IDPs. Full

exploration of these aims will seek to explore how inclusion, or lack of inclusion, of refugees/IDPs in pandemic preparedness initiatives impact refugees/IDPs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hypothesize that lack of inclusion of refugees/IDPs will be present which highlights an ongoing issue of inclusion and consideration for refugees/IDPs suggesting a need for targeted approaches that meet their specific needs.

H0: There will be a lack of inclusion of refugees/IDPs in COVID-19 preparedness and response.

H1: Refugees/IDPs are strongly considered in COVID-19 preparedness and response.

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
1. Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are refugees and IDPs included in global pandemic preparedness and response policies? • Are refugees and IDPs adequately represented in pandemic preparedness practical guidelines across leading agencies, governmental/non-governmental organizations and refugee-hosting countries? • Are refugees and IDPs including in academic literature on pandemic preparedness and response prior to, and during, COVID-19?
2. Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do current laws on pandemic preparedness and response represent or include refugees/IDPs as a target, or vulnerable, population? • Do international policy, treaties, or resolutions addressing pandemic preparedness and response represent refugees/IDPs? (In lieu of universal international policy?)
3. Practical Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do practical guidelines from leading agencies (WHO, CDC, CARES, etc.) contain specific guidelines for refugees/IDPs? • Do practical guidelines from NGOs and humanitarian organizations contain specific guidelines for refugees/IDPs? • Do government guidelines/practical measures in refugee-hosting countries focus on refugees/IDPs as it relates to COVID 19? • Who is the primary/target audience of practical guidelines for this pandemic?
4. Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does previous and current academic literature address pandemic preparedness and responses in relation to refugees/IDPs? • How does previous and current academic literature address refugees and IDPs in relation to COVID-19? • How does the academic literature for pandemic preparedness and response differ from epidemic preparedness and response (i.e., Ebola)?

Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

Qualitative content analysis will be utilized to examine each key area (Research, Policy and Practice) outlined in this agenda. Each area will be analyzed for inclusion of refugees/IDPs within the content. Inclusion and exclusion criteria have been identified for the remaining research topics. We will strictly examine policies that have become law, global policy resolutions, and political/theoretical frameworks adopted by governments that occurred between January 2015 to May 2020. The recommended five-year time period takes into consideration the latest policies on pandemic preparedness prior to COVID-19 through present as most policies on pandemics are not updated annually. Should previous policies/resolutions fall prior to 2015 without a recent update during the proposed time period, they will be included in this study. Practical guidelines will include the same inclusion criteria prior to and during the pandemic. Guidelines that are not in English will be excluded while noting that nations with alternative primary languages often adopt

guidelines from WHO, CDC, or the UN. We will focus on practical guidelines from leading agencies, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and government/protective measures from countries hosting high concentrations of refugees/IDPs. Academic literature review for the Research key area will be all-inclusive as preliminary research findings identified limited research on key topics such as ‘pandemics and refugees’. Qualitative data analysis will be conducted using Nvivo. The proposed methodology does not include human subjects, thus will not require approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Ethical/methodological considerations will be taken to ensure academic rigor, and proper online research etiquette is maintained.

Other Frameworks, Considerations for Collaboration, and/or Resources:

Additional considerations include the historical context of pandemics globally and how that has contributed to current pandemic preparedness and the impact of inclusion/exclusion of refugee/IDP specific policies, guidelines and research on pandemic response relative to refugees/IDPs. This Working Group will seek to identify implications for practice, research, and policy that seeks to support informed decision-making and contribute to the body of knowledge on vulnerability in crisis, protracted emergency disaster, and humanitarian settings.

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