

Mental Health in Immigrant Children and Adolescents in Northern Chile

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JOURNAL OF IMMIGRANT AND MINORITY HEALTH

DOI: 10.1007/s10903-020-01101-7



Acceso anticipado: OCT 2020

Tipo de documento: Article; Early Access

[Ver impacto de la revista](#)

Abstract

Approximately 1.251.225 foreign-born migrants reside in Chile, including 183.315 children. This study compares mental health indicators in immigrant and non-immigrant children to understand the mental health effects of migration. A cross-sectional study of 634 students from Chilean schools was conducted. Fifty percent of the students were immigrants. The System for the Evaluation of Children and Adolescents was used to evaluate mental health. No significant differences were observed in mental health indicators between immigrant and non-immigrant children. At both elementary and secondary levels, immigrant students had higher rates of contextual problems (family problems and problems with peers) and lower scores in integration and social consequence. Immigrant students in elementary schools scored lower in self-esteem. The higher rates of contextual problems in immigrant children should be addressed through structural changes in migration policies, such as providing support for employment of parents, welfare assistance, and access to health systems.

Palabras clave

Palabras clave de autor: [Mental health](#); [Immigrants](#); [Children](#); [Adolescents](#); [Chile](#)

KeyWords Plus: [DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS](#); [ACCULTURATION](#); [DISCRIMINATION](#)

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Financiación

Entidad financiadora	Número de concesión
ANID PIA	CIE160007

[Ver texto de financiación](#)

Editorial

SPRINGER, ONE NEW YORK PLAZA, SUITE 4600, NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES

Información de la revista

- **Impact Factor:** [Journal Citation Reports](#)

Categorías / Clasificación

Áreas de investigación:Public, Environmental & Occupational Health

Categorías de Web of Science:Public, Environmental & Occupational Health

Información del documento

Idioma:English

Número de acceso: WOS:000575765700001

ID de PubMed: 33021701

ISSN: 1557-1912

eISSN: 1557-1920