

The need and accessibility of general practitioners for asylum seekers in Baden-Württemberg - a geographical investigation at the level of accommodation centers

Abstract

Aim of the study: With almost 1.1 million refugees (2018), Germany is considered one of the ten largest receiving countries. The medical care of this population group is a major issue for the hosting countries. The scientific research is particularly dealing with the legal framework of access to health care, the geographical accessibility has so far been little investigated. The aim of this study is to examine the geographical accessibility of general practitioners from the perspective of asylum seekers living in accommodation centres.

Methods: A secondary analysis was conducted using data from a population-based cross-sectional study. A geographical information system was used to calculate the distances between accommodation centres and the nearest general practitioners. Regression analyses and concentration indices and curves have been performed.

Results: The results displayed an equal distribution of the distance to care providers in relation to the needs of the accommodation centres. A significant correlation is shown in the regional context (urban/rural) and distance, with urban regions measuring comparatively less distance to care. Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed a decrease of 9.4 (7.3) % of the average distance to the closest general practitioner with a one percent increase in accommodation size.

Conclusion: This feasibility study on the approach to the small-scale study of geographical accessibility has shown that distance to general medical care for asylum seekers' needs is relatively well covered. However, asylum seekers in rural areas face disadvantages in the accessibility to general practitioners. Despite possible factors that may be omitted, it is advisable to take the urban-rural character of a region into account when determining the geographical distribution of asylum seekers.

Key words: geographical accessibility, general practitioners, asylum seekers, GIS