

MEETING:

Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly

AGENDA ITEM:

34. Matters for information

34.1 Progress reports

C. Promoting the health of refugees and migrants (decision WHA72(14) (2019))

STATEMENT:

The prevalence of dermatological disease and skin conditions is a significant issue facing refugees and migrants globally. Displaced populations in particular are vulnerable to dermatological diseases, due to the poor conditions in which they live and transit through at different stages of their journey. Health assessments and general check-ups on arrival in reception centres are vital opportunities to identify and address dermatological conditions in refugees and migrants. However, scarce diagnostic and therapeutic resources combined with lack of specialist expertise hamper the provision of dermatologic care for displaced populations.

Digital education and telemedicine, if properly designed and implemented, can strengthen health workforce capacity by delivering education to remote areas and enabling continuous learning for health workers. Additionally, it can facilitate diagnostic and management support for non-specialist frontline healthcare field workers.

Beside education, we deem it necessary to improve access to care and develop a simple essential drugs formulary addressing common skin condition at settlements.

To address these needs, the International Foundation for Dermatology, the humanitarian arm of the International League of Dermatological Societies, established a Migrant Health Dermatology Working Group bringing together dermatologists with specific expertise and understanding of the skin health needs of displaced populations and work towards solutions to these issues. However, further action is needed.

We call for the commitment of member states to scale up and strengthen the quality of health workforce education, training to address skin diseases, ensure culturally sensitive care practices, and use of competent interpreters where necessary.

We further envisage adoption of community-based models of dermatology care, as well as general health promotion, to improve outcomes during settlement incorporated into countries' national action plans.

The ILDS and our members stand ready to support the WHO in the development of skin health workforce education and training and commit to tirelessly working for its achievement.