

Mental Health of Migrants in Covid-19 Pandemic: Systematic Review

Covid-19 Pandemisinde Göçmenlerin Ruh Sağlığı: Sistemik Derleme

✉ Tuğçe Uçgun¹, ✉ Ebru Akgün Çıtak¹

¹Başkent University, Ankara

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected the mental health of individuals due to both the process and the restrictions it imposes. Migrants, especially one of the vulnerable groups, have been adversely affected by the pandemic due to both the difficulties brought by the migration itself and the living conditions unsuitable for Covid-19. All these negative situations caused the migrants to experience psychosocial problems and created a threat in terms of mental health. A limited number of studies have been found in the literature on the psychosocial problems and mental health of migrants. The aim of this study is to review the studies on the evaluation of psychosocial problems and mental health of immigrants during the Covid-19 pandemic and to systematically examine the results of these studies. Systematic searches were conducted in "PubMed", "Web of Science", "ScienceDirect" and "Scopus" database with using to 'migrants, migrant workers, Covid-19 pandemic, mental health, psychosocial issues' keywords and combinations. Seventeen studies were included in the systematic review. The sample size of the studies varies between 10 and 28.853. As a result of the data, it was determined that the most common psychosocial problems of migrants in the Covid-19 pandemic are depression, anxiety, distress, hopelessness, decrease in socioeconomic level, and social isolation. As a result of the study, it was found that many psychosocial problems that migrants experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected their mental health. The evidence determined in this study may guide the psychosocial evaluation of migrants in Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Migrants, Covid-19, mental health, psychosocial issues

ÖZ

Covid-19 pandemisi hem süreç olarak hem de getirdiği kısıtlamalar dolayısıyla bireylerin ruh sağlığı üzerinde olumsuz etkiler yaratmıştır. Özellikle incinebilir gruplardan biri olan göçmenler hem göçün kendisinin getirdiği güçlükler hem de Covid-19'a uygun olmayan yaşam koşulları nedeniyle pandemiden daha da olumsuz etkilenmiştir. Tüm bu olumsuzluklar göçmenlerin psikososyal sorunlar yaşamalarına neden olmuş ve ruh sağlığı yönünden bir tehdit oluşturmuştur. Literatürde göçmenlerin yaşadıkları psikososyal sorunları ve ruh sağlıklarını ele alan sınırlı sayıda çalışmaya rastlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Covid-19 pandemisinde göçmenlerin yaşadığı psikososyal sorunların ve ruh sağlıklarının değerlendirilmesine yönelik çalışmaların gözden geçirilmesi ve bu çalışmalardan elde edilen sonuçların sistemik bir şekilde incelenmesidir. Konu ile ilgili "PubMed", "Web of Science", "Scopus" "GoogleScholar" ve "ScienceDirect" elektronik veri tabanları taranmıştır. Tarama yapılırken her bir veri tabanı için de anahtar kelime ve kombinasyonları olarak "göçmen, psikososyal sorun, Covid-19 pandemisi, migrants, migrant workers, Covid-19 pandemic, mental health issues, psychosocial issues" kullanılmıştır. Dahil edilme kriterlerine uyan 17 çalışma incelenmiştir. Çalışmaların örneklem sayıları 10 ile 28.853 arasında değişmektedir. Elde edilen veriler sonucunda Covid-19 pandemisinde göçmenlerin en sık yaşadığı psikososyal sorunlar depresyon, anksiyete, distres, umutsuzluk, sosyoekonomik düzeyde azalma, sosyal izolasyon olarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda göçmenlerin Covid-19 pandemisinde yaşadıkları birçok sorunun ruh sağlıklarını olumsuz etkilediği bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen kanıtların Covid-19 pandemisinde göçmenlerin psikososyal açıdan değerlendirilmesi için literatüre katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Göçmen, Covid-19, ruh sağlığı, psikososyal sorun

Introduction

The concept of migration, which is a sociological phenomenon, has important traces in history. From past to present, geographical reasons like drought, political reasons like occupation and war; will for better living conditions have important effects on migration (Görmez ve ark 2017). Migration is defined as "Population movements -regardless of the aim, form or duration- within a state or cross-border movements in the international system" by the International Migration Organization Migration dictionary (Perruchoud and

Address for Correspondence: Tuğçe Uçgun, Başkent University Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing, Ankara, Türkiye **E-mail:** tugceucgunn@gmail.com

Received: 04.03.2022 | **Accepted:** 19.07.2022

Redpath Cross 2011). In summary, the concept of migration emerged as a result of the formation of nation states and the determination of the borders of states, and it continues to affect large masses today (Görmez et al. 2017)

According to the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2022 report, 89.4 million people had to migrate forcibly in 2020. According to this report, 26.4 million of these people were refugees and 4.1 million were asylum seekers. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) 2020 data, in the world, Turkey is the country hosting the highest number of Syrian refugees with 3.7 million people (UNHCR 2020a). Due to its location, Turkey has witnessed many international migration events throughout history. Especially as a result of the recent developments in the Middle East, an increase is observed in the migration traffic towards Turkey. There are predominantly Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi refugees in Turkey (UNHCR 2020b).

When the literature is examined, different concepts namely refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers are encountered. 'Immigrant; is defined as people who move to and live in another country legally and voluntarily, mainly for economic reasons. 'Refugee is explained by "People who do not want to return to their original country due to reasons such as feeling danger of losing their life and property for any reason, fear of injustice and not being able to benefit from the protection of the country they live in". Asylum seeker is defined as "people who have become somewhat a refuge in another country as a result of their claim, but have not yet been accepted by the legal authorities as a refugee" (Akpınar 2017)

Migration is a psychosocially traumatic and challenging life event for refugees and immigrants who had to leave their country and in general terms it is a social crisis. The migration process is a complex and long lasting process that includes various events and certain stages. Having no chance to prepare before migration starts, difficulties in adapting to the new environment, the challenges of new life, language barrier, cultural differences and negative experiences make it so hard for immigrants to adapt in this process. Unhealthy living conditions, unemployment, low income, uninsured work, nutritional deficiencies, language barriers, not knowing the institutions where they can get service, lack of social support, negative prejudices and behaviors of other individuals in the society against immigrants and stigmatization can result in stress (Coutts et al. 2013; Steel et al. 2009, Miller and Rasmussen 2010, Alpak et al. 2015; Slewa-Younan et al. 2015, Hollander et al. 2016, Mewes et al. 2017, Satinsky et al. 2019). All these stresses and traumas experienced during the migration process have an important negative impact on the mental health of immigrants (Miller and Rasmussen 2017, Satinsky et al. 2019). When the researches are examined, the psychological effects of migration are as follows;

- a. Fear and anxiety: Fear of the person and the family about adapting to the new environment and the blurry future drive them experience anxiety. Due to the necessity of being cautious, people experience distrust towards the new settlement and people (Koydemir and Schütz 2014). These circumstances make people experience more anxiety.
- b. Adaptation challenges: People may experience adaptation problems due to cultural and language differences. (Tuesday et al. 2012). People sometimes conflict with their own values and judgments in order to adapt to the new society. Consequent dilemma may cause psychological conflicts of emotions, personality and identity problems in the inner world and family life of individuals (Salı et al. 2012, Ünal 2014).
- c. Belonging problem: People's need for belonging also manifests itself in the sense of belonging to a place. Immigrants are far away from the society they belong and the trust feeling it gives. When belonging needs are not met (Paksoy and Karadeniz 2016), it causes immigrants to experience a sense of alienation and emptiness.

It has been reported that as a result of all these psychological difficulties, mental disorders such as depression, psychotic disorder, anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder are common among immigrants (Lindert et al. 2009, Steel et al. 2009, Miller and Rasmussen 2010, Alpak et al. 2015, Slewa- Younan et al.. 2015, Hollander et al.. 2017, Ilić et al.. 2017, Satinsky et al.. 2019, Byrow et al., 2020). Immigrants, who went through a process of adaptation in the post-migration period, experienced both financial and psychosocial difficulties with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and formed the weakest and most vulnerable group (Karabulut and Aker 2020). It is considered to be the vulnerable group that faces the most negative consequences from the Covid-19 pandemic due to being less visible in social areas, having difficulty in accessing health services, treatment and prevention services, being blamed for the spread of coronavirus in the community (Broid, 2020; Guadagno 2020).

Covid-19; was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and has become a global epidemic in the course of time (Clerkin et al. 2020, Velevan and Meyer 2020, WHO 2020a). As a result of the increase in Covid-19 cases, the Covid-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020 (WHO

2020b). In our country, starting with the first case of Covid-19, various restrictions initiated by the Ministry of Health in March 2020 (Saglik Bakanligi 2020). It has been very difficult for immigrants and refugees to comply with measures such as social distancing, wearing of masks, hand hygiene, disinfecting surfaces to prevent the dissemination of the coronavirus (CDC 2022). Factors such as immigrants' living in crowded environments, lack of social distance, scarcity of food and clean water, limited access to soap and hand sanitizers, and difficulties to access masks and health services complicated compliance with the measures (Ralli et al. 2020).

Having said that, under the conditions such as higher risk of catching Covid-19, limited treatment opportunities, more uncertainty caused by the disease, lack of health insurance, working in bad conditions, language and culture barrier, repeated exposure to neglect such as abuse etc, immigrants have become more risky in terms of both their physical and mental health. In addition, immigrants' access to mental health services was also much more limited during the pandemic, and immigrants could not receive adequate support (Hargreaves et al. 2019, Burton-Jeangros et al. 2020, Guadagno 2020, Kluge et al. 2020, Liem et al. 2020, Rothman et al. 2020). In addition to all these reasons, job loss, worsening socioeconomic conditions, quarantine experience and fear of not being able to return to their hometowns negatively affected the mental health of these individuals (Chander et al. 2021). Although there are many studies in the literature on the psychosocial effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and its limitations on people, studies and systematic reviews that deal with the psychosocial experience by immigrants, as a vulnerable group, are limited. In fact, in Turkey, no systematic review on this subject has been found. Considering the number of refugees in our country; it is believed that the evidence collected with this study would be valuable in the psychosocial evaluation of immigrants in the Covid-19 pandemic.

This systematic review was conducted through two research questions: "What are the psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants in the Covid-19 pandemic?" and "What are the mental problems experienced by immigrants in the Covid-19 pandemic?". The aims of this systematic review were to (a) analyse the psychosocial problems and mental health of immigrants during the Covid-19 pandemic and (b) to systematically examine the results obtained from these studies.

Methods

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis (PRISMA) Checklist and Cochrane were used as a guideline while preparing the report of review. In this research, studies published in English and Turkish languages between January 2020 and December 2021 were examined retrospectively. "PubMed", "Web of Science", "Scopus", "GoogleScholar" and "ScienceDirect" were utilized as data sources. The following keywords were used: migrants, OR migrant workers, AND, Covid-19 pandemic, AND mental health issues, OR psychosocial issues. The guide "Center for Reviews and Dissemination" 2009 has been taken into account for the examination of the databases (Higgins and Green 2011). Filters were applied based on study inclusion or exclusion criteria. The authors assessed all the abstracts in terms of the following inclusion criteria: Studies (a) living as an immigrant in the Covid-19 pandemic, (b) involving adult participants older than 18 years regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, (c) published in peer-reviewed journals in January 2020 and December 2021, (d) qualitative and quantitative studies, reviews and systematic reviews published in Turkish and English. The studies excluded are those: (a) reported gray literature such as thesis, dissertations, letters to the editor, committee reports, government reports, and conference papers (b) non-directly relevant and repetitive studies, (c) studies whose full text is not available. Population, Intervention, Control, Outcome and Studies (PICOs) strategy were used for data search. Research questions were formed as P: sample group/population, I: intervention/intervention, C: comparison, P: result, S: study design. The sample characteristics and size of each study included in the review (P), the mental and psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants as a result of the studies (O), and descriptive studies (S) were evaluated. All characteristics of the included studies are described in Table 1.

As a result of the literature review, 1753 studies were reached based on keywords. The first search retrieved 1753 articles, out of which 1253 were duplicate ones. The authors evaluated the titles and abstracts of the remaining 500 articles and 400 of them were excluded because of nonconformity to the inclusion criteria. After full-text review process of the remaining 51 studies, 19 were excluded due to limitations to reach full details of the research, 15 were excluded since they were non-directly relevant. Finally, 17 studies were included in the current systematic reviews (Figure 1). The "PRISMA" flowchart was used by the researchers to control the study. Ethics committee approval is not required due to; (a) the research articles included in the sample of this study are obtained from open source electronic databases and (b) there is no risk of material/moral harm to the researchers during the study. Researches included in the study are mentioned in the bibliography.

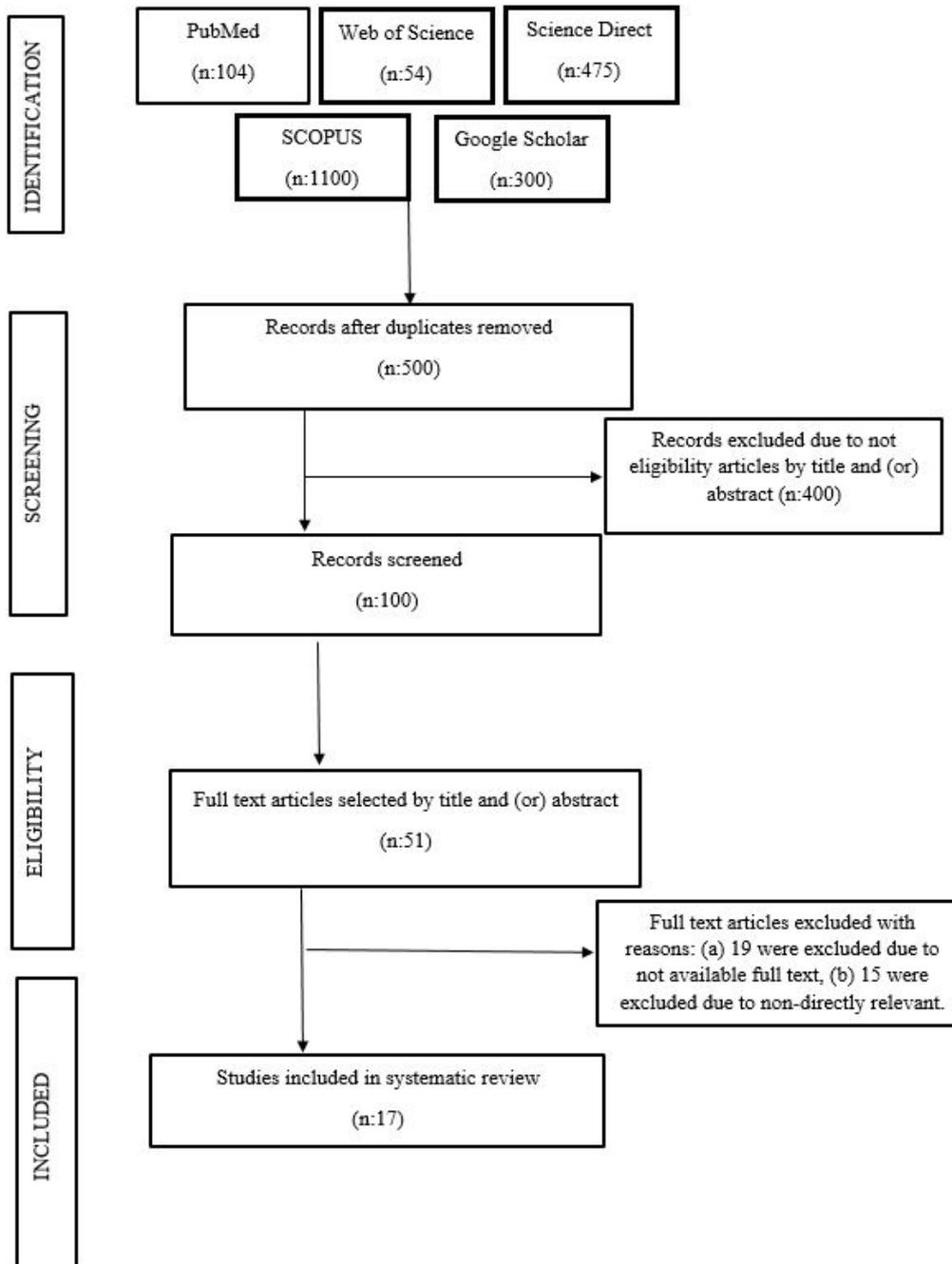


Figure 1. Flowchart of studies included in the systematic review (PRISMA-P flowchart)

Results

Among 17 researches covered in this systematic review; 5 of them are qualitative, 1 is review, 10 are descriptive cross-sectional and 1 is case-control type research designs. Researches regarding the psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants living in Turkey during the Covid-19 pandemic were also observed during the study (Bernardi et al. 2021, Bozdağ 2021). Among the studies included in the systematic review, The sample sizes of the included studies ranged from 10 to 28.853 (WHO 2020c, Bozdağ 2021).

All the studies included outcomes which examine psychosocial problems as discussed with one study examining anxiety, four studies examining psychosocial problems, four studies examining depression, anxiety and stress, one study examining mental health and psychosocial problems, one study examining psychological distress, one study examining mental well-being, one study examining psychosocial problems, substance use disorder and

depression, one study examining psychological resilience, two studies examining stress and sources of stress, one study examining psychosocial problems and psychiatric disorders. Among all the studies examined, four studies' sample size included Indian immigrants, three studies' sample size included Syrian immigrants, three studies' sample size included Indonesian immigrants and one study included Nepali immigrants. On the other hand in five studies examined, the nationalities of the immigrants were not specified. Among the studies examined, not only external migration but also the psychosocial problems of immigrants living as a result of external migration were discussed. In this systematic review, information about the basic characteristics of each study included such as the name of the author, publication year, sample size, purpose and result of the study, is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the included studies						
Source	Aim	Sample	Location	Psychosocial Problems	Outcome Measures	Results
Acharya et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to examine the mental health of immigrants living in South Korea during the Covid-19 pandemic	386 immigrants	South Korea	Anxiety	Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) Scale	The prevalence of severe anxiety among immigrants was found to be 47.2%. Female immigrants had a lower anxiety disorder than males.
Bernardi et al.2021	The aim of this study is to examine the association between COVID-19 and changes in mental health in Syrian refugees in Turkey.	302 Syrian immigrants	Turkey	Depression, anxiety and perceived stress	the CoRonavIruS Health Impact Survey (CRISIS) Center for Epidemiologic Study Depression Scale (CESD-10), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-6), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-4)	This study found that changes in the quality of social relationships, pandemic-related stress and feelings of hopelessness about the end of the pandemic were associated with depressive symptoms
Bhandari et al.2021	The aim of this study is to identify challenges faced by Nepalese migrants in Japan as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic	14 Nepali immigrants	Japan	Mental health, psychosocial problems	The semi-structured interview	Six themes were identified in this study: experiencing psychosomatic symptoms, adoption of new healthy behaviors, financial hardship, family concerns, reflections on discrimination and reflections of existing support and expectations of support systems.
Bozdağ 2021	The aim of this study is to identify challenges faced by Syrian immigrants in Turkey as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic	10 Syrian immigrants	Turkey	Psychosocial problems	The semi-structured interview	It has been determined that immigrants are exposed to psychosocial problems such as feeling lonely, being exposed to stigma, and restricting their social lives.
Chavan et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to examine the various psychosocial factors associated with reverse migration among migrant workers during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown in India	275 Indian immigrants 276 control groups	India	Psychosocial problems	A knowledge, attitude, and practice questionnaire regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and a questionnaire designed to assess reasons for and effects of migration and reverse migration	This study found that reverse migration workers reported feeling low and gloomy, restless, uncertain about the future and fear of death and lack of jobs was a major factor driving migrant workers from their native homes.

Desie et al.2021	The aim of this study was to examine the coping strategies used by returnees who were in mandatory quarantine in Ethiopia in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.	405 Indonesian immigrants	Ethiopia	Coping with stress	Brief COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) scale	This study found that emotion-focused coping and dysfunctional coping mainly religious coping was the most frequently used coping strategy in the study group.
Habtamu et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to investigate the prevalence of psychological distress and associated factors among migrant returnees who were in quarantine during the time of COVID-19.	405 Indonesian immigrants	Ethiopia	Psychological distress	21 item Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21)	This study found that a very high prevalence of depressive, anxiety and stress symptoms among Ethiopian migrant returnees who were in quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Harjana et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to assess the prevalence and associated factors of depression, anxiety, and stress among Repatriated Indonesian migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.	335 Indonesian immigrants	Bali	Anxiety, depression and stress	21 item Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) Health Belief Model Scale	This study found the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among repatriated Indonesian migrant workers were 10.15, 9.25, and 2.39%, respectively. Also, the risk of anxiety and depression was high among those who had bad perceived health status, high perceived susceptibility, and negative stigma perception.
Khan et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to attempts to analysis of economic and psychological impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on Indian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia	180 Indian immigrant	Saudi Arabia	Psychosocial problems,	The semi-structured data collection form	Majority of the sampled migrants reported the problem of nervousness, anxiety, and depression; however, they were also hopeful about the future
Kumar et al.2021	The aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences of some Indian migrant workers during the first COVID-19 pandemic nationwide lockdown and investigating their plights from a social identity perspective.	12 Indian immigrant	India	Psychosocial problems,	The semi-structured interview	It has been reported that the mental health of the Indian migrant workers, which was bad before the Covid-19 pandemic, were even more adversely affected by the pandemic.
Ming, and De Jong, 2021	The aim of this study is to investigate Chinese immigrants' perceptions of and experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic,	268 Chinese immigrant	Netherlands	Mental well-being	Short Depression-Happiness Scale (SDHS)	This study found that five antecedents of decreased mental well-being: financial concerns, social isolation, feelings of lost time, experienced racism, and distrust of Dutch COVID-19 information and figures.
Saw et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to examine the mental symptoms experienced by immigrants living in Singapore during the Covid-19 pandemic	1011 immigrants	Singapore	Depression, anxiety, stress	21 item Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21)	Complete movement restrictions were associated with increased depression and stress symptoms, while being diagnosed with COVID-19 was associated with increased anxiety.
Singh 2021	The aim of this study is to examine the mental health and psychosocial problems by immigrants during Covid-19 pandemic	Studies involving samples size of 25-35,000 immigrant	India	Psychosocial problems, substance use disorder, depression	Interstate Migrant policy index (IMPEX), social Indicators, Prime-MD-PHQ Drug Screening Questionnaire, Migration and reverse migration questionnaire	As a result of the study, it has been determined that the psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants are related to living conditions, basic needs, family problems and unemployment. In addition, psychological distress, depressive disorder, anxiety disorders and substance use disorders were observed in the participants.

Srivastava et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to understand the inconvenience Indian internal migrant workers faced during the global crisis of the pandemic.	25 Indian immigrant	India	Stress, coping with stress	The semi-structured interview	This study shown that that multiple stressors include financial crisis, unavailability of food, inability to continue education, inability to pay house rent, lack of support from neighbors and family, and other psychological stressors that affected Indian internal migrant workers.
Yee et al. 2021	The aim of this study is to examine the concerns and coping methods of immigrants living in Singapore during the Covid-19 pandemic	27 immigrants	Singapore	Sources of stress	The semi-structured interview	As a results of this study, major stressors in the crisis included the inability to continue providing for their families when work is disrupted, their susceptibility to infection in crowded dormitories, the shock of receiving the COVID-19 diagnosis while asymptomatic, as well as the isolating conditions of the quarantine environment.
WHO 2020c	The aim of this study is to examine the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of migrants around the world.	28,853 immigrants	Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Florida, Switzerland, England, Portugal, France, Spain, Greece, Netherlands	Psychosocial problems psychiatric disorders	The semi-structured data collection form including: self-reported health status related to COVID-19, Covid-19 and mental health, daily stressors, psychological well-being	This study determined that the mental health of the participants in general has worsened with the Covid-19 pandemic, and they feel more depressed, anxious, lonely, angry, stressed, nervous and hopeless. In addition, it was reported that the participants experienced more sleep problems and used more substances and alcohol than before..
Bernardi et al. 2020	The aim of this study is to investigation of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the living conditions and mental health of Syrian immigrants	512 Syrian immigrants	Turkey	Depression, anxiety, stress	the CoRonavIruS Health Impact Survey (CRISIS)	It was reported that 44% of the Syrian immigrants felt depression symptoms, 48% of Syrian immigrants had anxiety symptoms and 29% of Syrian immigrants felt stress during the day.

As a result of quantitative studies examining the psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants during Covid-19 pandemic, it has been determined that factors such as depression, anxiety, distress, feeling of hopelessness, worrying about their families, decrease in socioeconomic level, and social isolation reduced immigrants' quality of life (Bernardi et al. 2020, WHO 2020c, Acharya et al. 2021, Bernardi et al. 2021, Chavan et al. 2021, Desie et al. 2021, Habtamu et al. 2021, Harjana et al. 2021, Khan et al. 2021, Ming and De Jong 2021, Saw et al. 2021, Singh 2021). In the qualitative studies on the immigrants' mental health with the Covid-19 pandemic, working in worse conditions, not being able to meet their basic nutritional needs as a result of dismissal, not being able to reach enough information with Covid-19 due to language barriers, limited access to health services, exclusion and exposure to stigma by the society of being the source of Covid-19 dissemination, their quarantine with the diagnosis of Covid-19, the inability to return to their hometowns have negatively affected the lives of immigrants (Bhandari et al. 2021, Bozdağ 2021, Kumar et al. 2021, Srivastava et al. 2021, Yee et al. 2021). As a result of exposure to a large number of negative factors, it caused immigrants to have mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, distress, substance and alcohol use (Bernardi et al. 2020, WHO 2020c, Acharya et al. 2021, Bernardi et al. 2021, Desie et al. 2021, Habtamu et al. 2021, Harjana et al. 2021, Saw et a 2021, Singh, 2021).

Discussion

In this systematic review, it has been focused primarily on the psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the studies examined, immigrants have the most common psychosocial problems such as anxiety, depression, distress, hopelessness and helplessness. Although these psychosocial problems can be seen in the process of adapting to a new society and culture, and starting a new life due to migration, it is highlighted that there is an increase in the occurrence and severity of these psychosocial problems during Covid-19 pandemic.

The analysis of the literature reveals that there are studies examining the factors affecting the mental health of immigrants in the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of these studies, it has been determined that many factors have negative effects on the mental health of immigrants. These factors are; having a low socioeconomic level, poor housing conditions, difficulty in accessing clean food and water, worrying about their families in their country, feeling pressure to return to their home country, losing job, not being able to go out due to restrictions, social isolation, decrease in social relationships, feeling lonely, being in a high-risk group for Covid-19, uncertainty about the Covid-19 pandemic and not knowing how to continue their lives, having difficulty in accessing necessary information due to language barriers, being perceived as the reason for the spread of Covid-19 and therefore being discriminated (Bhandari et al. 2021, Bozdağ 2021, Chavan et al. 2021, Khan et al. 2021, Kumar et al. 2021, Ming and De Jong 2021, Singh 2021).

There are some studies highlighting that depression is frequently seen on immigrants and refugees during Covid-19 pandemic (Bernardi et al. 2020, Bernardi et al. 2021, Harjana et al. 2021, Khan et al. 2021, Saw et al. 2021, Singh 2021). Bernardi et al. (2020, 2021) determined that 17% of Syrian immigrants living in Turkey often or always experience depressive symptoms, while 44% sometimes experience depressive symptoms. Also, these studies have shown that many factors such as fear of losing their jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic, decrease in social support and negative changes in social relationships, increased stress levels and feeling of hopelessness regarding the end of pandemic are effective in the symptoms of depression of immigrants. The finding of a study which was examining the prevalence of depressive symptoms experienced by immigrants during the Covid-19 pandemic, has highlighted that 10.15% of immigrants had depressive symptoms (Harjana et al. 2021). Studies in the literature reported that immigrants who were stigmatized due to being under-educated, being quarantined for 14 days, being elderly, living conditions and being diagnosed with Covid-19 showed more severe depressive symptoms (Harjana et al. 2021, Khan et al. 2021). Saw et al. (2021) found that immigrants who experience anxiety because of their health and fear of losing their job, and exposed to restrictions showed more depressive symptoms. In another study, it was stated that immigrants who live in India had symptoms of depression as a result of experiencing more fear of poverty and hunger, losing their job, being infected and infected their families (Singh 2021). The analysis of the literature reveals that feeling depressed might reduce immigrants' quality of life (Bernardi et al. 2020, Bernardi et al. 2021, Harjana et al. 2021, Khan et al. 2021, Saw et al. 2021, Singh 2021). In a study of meta-analysis, which were included 5143 immigrants from 15 countries and examined their mental health before the pandemic, it has been stated that the prevalence of depression was 31.5% and anxiety disorders were 11% of immigrants. When the prevalence of anxiety and depression in immigrants before pandemic and post-pandemic were examined, although there is no concrete evidence, it was concluded that the negative effects of migration were experienced intensely during the Covid-19 pandemic (Blackmore et al. 2020).

Another important psychosocial problem during the Covid-19 pandemic is that immigrants cannot effectively coping with stress and as a result they are experiencing distress (Bernardi et al. 2020, Bernardi et al. 2021, Desie et al. 2021, Habtamu et al. 2021, Saw et al. 2021, Srivastava et al. 2021, Yee et al. 2021). As a result of studies which examined the factors affecting the distress of immigrants, it has been reported that immigrants have been effected by some factors such as economic and living conditions during the pandemic, exposure to restrictions, negative effects of relationships due to the pandemic, and the feeling of hopelessness about the end of pandemic (Bernardi et al. 2020, 2021). The studies conducted on immigrants who returned back to their home-country during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was determined that 13.4% of these immigrants had symptoms of severe stress. Also, these studies found that immigrants had lack of information about quarantine and future plan, and appearance of severe Covid-19 symptoms affected their stress levels. In addition to these results, it was also underlined in the same studies that immigrants frequently use alcohol/substance and do over self-criticism, which are known to be maladaptive methods of coping with stress (Desie et al. 2021, Habtamu et al. 2021). Saw et al. (2021) found that the immigrants who are being quarantined or under restriction, being worried about their health, having symptoms of Covid-19 and having low socioeconomic level, were having higher stress levels. As a results of these studies, sources of stress are underlined as inability to meet their basic nutritional needs, having lower level of socioeconomics, the lower level of perceived social support, barrier of language, concern for their families' health, uncertainty about the Covid-19 pandemic, exposure over information about Covid-19, fear of being diagnosed with Covid-19, experiencing social isolation (Bhandari et al. 2021, Srivastava et al. 2021, Yee et al. 2021).

The studies in literature revealed that the anxiety levels of immigrants increased during Covid-19 pandemic (Bernardi et al. 2020, WHO 2020c, Acharya et al. 2021, Bernardi et al. 2021, Harjana et al. 2021, et al. 2021). Acharya et al. (2021) reported that the prevalence of severe anxiety of immigrants is 47.2% during Covid-19 pandemic. Also in the same study, sociodemographic data of immigrants with severe anxiety was examined, and

it is observed that being male, being married, getting fired because of Covid-19 pandemic, being 30 years old and over, having chronic disease and being at lower levels of socioeconomic scale, have been caused more severe anxiety (Acharya et al. 2021). Bernardi et al. (2020, 2021) reported that 48% of the Syrian immigrants who live in Turkey, had an increase in their anxiety level. Also, they underlined that immigrants who were exposed to restrictions in the Covid-19 pandemic, having worse socioeconomic levels and living conditions, were more negatively affected. As a result of the studies, it has been determined that higher levels of anxiety associated with having lower level of perceived health status, being hypersensitive, being exposure to stigma, fear of getting fired, being diagnosed with Covid-19 and being exposed to over-information about the Covid-19 pandemic (Harjana et al. 2021, Saw et al. 2021). As a result of a worldwide survey conducted by the WHO, it has been determined that more than 50% of the immigrants have increased their anxiety levels because of some reasons. These reasons, namely the uncertainty about the future, the fear that they or someone from their neighborhood will be diagnosed with Covid-19, and fear about worsening economic conditions has been affected in the increase of immigrants' level of anxiety (WHO 2020c). Additionally, some studies reported that there was an increase in substance and alcohol use by immigrants during Covid-19 pandemic (WHO 2020c, Singh 2021).

Conclusion

The phenomenon of migration is a compelling, traumatic event that causes people to be exposed to many stressors in areas such as cultural adaptation, security, education, economy, housing and health. When immigrants cannot cope with these stressors effectively, they may experience many psychosocial problems such as fear, anxiety, helplessness, identity problems, insecurity, and belonging. Although the Covid-19 pandemic affects the whole world, immigrants and asylum seekers have been more negatively affected and more vulnerable with the challenges brought by immigration. By the help of this systematic review, the psychosocial problems experienced in immigrants during the Covid-19 pandemic were examined. In this systematic review, 17 descriptive studies that are quantitative and qualitative, were included. As a result of these studies, it has been shown that psychosocial problems such as depression, anxiety, distress, hopelessness and helplessness are so common among immigrants. Although the result is similar to the problems experienced in post-migration immigrants without a pandemic, it is observed that the levels of impact increased with the pandemic. It emphasizes that policies should be developed by the states in order to increase the quality of life of immigrants in the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that they can access treatment for mental problems such as depression and anxiety, and to protect the physical and mental well-being of immigrants in the Covid-19 pandemic. The health care team that provides health services to immigrants can play a role in the holistic protection of immigrants' health by evaluating their physical health and psychosocial problems, ensuring that they receive better health care with consultation when necessary, and providing necessary nursing care interventions. As a result, the treatment of psychosocial problems experienced by immigrants will increase their quality of life.

References

- Acharya SR, Moon DH, Chun JH, Shin YC (2021) COVID-19 and mental health: Anxiety disorders among immigrants due to COVID-19 outbreak in South Korea. *Int J Psychiatry Med*, 57:323-337.
- Akpınar T (2017) Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteciler çocukların ve kadınların sosyal politika bağlamında yaşadıkları sorunlar. *Balkan and Near Eastern Journal of Social Sciences*, 3:16-29
- Alpak G, Unal A, Bulbul F, Sagaltici E, Bez Y, Altindag A et al. (2015) Post-traumatic stress disorder among Syrian refugees in Turkey: a cross-sectional study. *Int J Psychiatry Clin Pract*, 19:45-50.
- Bernardi L, Gotlib IH, Zihnioglu Ö (2021) Effects of COVID-19-related life changes on mental health in Syrian refugees in Turkey. *BJPsych Open*, 7:e182
- Bernardi L, Zihnioglu O, Gotlib IH (2020) The Syrian Refugee Mental Health Panel Study: The COVID-19 Report. Liverpool, UK, University of Liverpool.
- Bhandari D, Kotera Y, Ozaki A, Abeysinghe S, Kosaka M, Tanimoto T (2021) COVID-19: challenges faced by Nepalese migrants living in Japan. *BMC Public Health*, 21:752.
- Blackmore R, Boyle JA, Fazel M, Ranasinha S, Gray KM, Fitzgerald G et al. (2020) The prevalence of mental illness in refugees and asylum seekers: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Plos Med*, 21:e1003337
- Bozdağ F (2021) Covid-19'un Suriyeli mülteciler üzerindeki etkileri. *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 25:701-722.

- Broid G (2020) Xenophobia during Coronavirus pandemic: Attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic groups. Negev, Ben Gurion University of the Negev.
- Burton-Jeangros C, Duvoisin A, Lachat S, Consoli L, Fakhoury J, Jackson Y (2020) The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown on the health and living conditions of undocumented migrants and migrants undergoing legal status regularization. *Front Public Health*, 8:596887.
- Byrow Y, Pajak R, Specker P, Nickerson A (2020) Perceptions of mental health and perceived barriers to mental health help-seeking amongst refugees: a systematic review. *Clin Psychol Rev*, 75:101812.
- CDC (2022) COVID Prevention. Atlanta GA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Chander R, Murugesan M, Ritish D, Damodharan D, Arunachalam V, Parthasarathy R et al. (2021) Addressing the mental health concerns of migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: an experiential account. *Int J Soc Psychiatry*, 67:826-829.
- Chavan BS, Sidana A, Arun P, Rohilla R, Singh GP, Solanki RK et al. (2021) Factors leading to reverse migration among migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: A multicenter study from Northwest India. *Prim Care Companion CNS Disord*, 23:30398.
- Clerkin KJ, Fried JA, Raikhelkar J, Sayer G, Griffin JM, Masoumi A, et al. (2020) COVID-19 and cardiovascular disease. *Circulation*, 141:1648-1655.
- Coutts A, McKee M, Stuckler D (2013) The emerging Syrian health crisis, *Lancet*, 381:e6-e7.
- Desie Y, Habtamu K, Asnake M, Gina E, Mequanint T (2021) Coping strategies among Ethiopian migrant returnees who were in quarantine in the time of COVID-19: a center-based cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychol*, 9:192.
- Görmez K, Eroğlu HT, Bahçeci HI (2017) Küreselleşme, göç, göç yönetimi ve Türkiye. 11. Kaysem Sempozyumu, 28-30 Eylül 2017, Elazığ, Kongre Özet Kitabı, sayfa:561-575.
- Guadagno L (2020) Migrants and the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Initial Analysis. Geneva, International Organization for Migration.
- Habtamu K, Desie Y, Asnake M, Lera EG, Mequanint T (2021) Psychological distress among Ethiopian migrant returnees who were in quarantine in the context of COVID-19: institution-based cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 21:424.
- Hargreaves S, Rustage K, Nellums LB, McAlpine A, Pocock N, Devakumar D et al. (2019) Occupational health outcomes among international migrant workers: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Glob Health*, 7:e872-882.
- Harjana NPA, Januraga PP, Indrayathi PA, Gesesew HA, Ward PR (2021) Prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among repatriated Indonesian migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Front Public Health*, 9:630295.
- Higgins JPT, Green S (2011) *Cochrane handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*, Version 5.1.0. London, UK, The Cochrane Collaboration.
- Hollander AC, Dal H, Lewis G, Magnusson C, Kirkbride JB, Dalman C (2016) Refugee migration and risk of schizophrenia and other non-affective psychoses: Cohort study of 1.3 million people in Sweden. *BMJ*, 352:i1030
- Ilić B, Švab V, Sedić B, Kovačević I, Friganović A, Jurić E (2017) Mental health in domesticated immigrant population—a systematic review. *Psychiatr Danub*, 29:273-281.
- IOM (2021) *World Migration Report 2022*. Geneva, International Organization for Migration.
- Karabulut E, Aker T (2020) COVID-19 ve Mülteciler. Ankara, Türkiye Psikiyatri Derneği Ruhsal Travma ve Afet Çalışma.
- Khan MA, Khan MI, Illiyan A, Khojah M (2021) The economic and psychological impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on Indian migrant workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Healthcare (Basel)*, 9:1152.
- Kluge HHP, Jakab Z, Bartovic J, d'Anna V, Severoni S (2020) Refugee and migrant health in the COVID-19 response. *Lancet*, 395:1237-1239
- Koydemir S, Schütz A. (2014) Almanya'daki Türk göçmenlerde yaşam doyumu: kültürel kimlik ve benlik kurgularının rolü, *Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi*, 5:208-220.
- Kumar N, Udah H, Francis A, Singh S, Wilson A (2021) Indian migrant workers' experience during the COVID-19 pandemic nationwide lockdown. *J Asian Afr Stud*, 57:911-931.
- Liem A, Wang C, Wariyanti Y, Latkin CA, Hall BJ (2020) The neglected health of international migrant workers in the COVID-19 epidemic. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 7:e20.

- Lindert J, von Ehrenstein OS, Priebe S, Mielck A, Brähler E (2009) Depression and anxiety in labor migrants and refugees—a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Soc Sci Med*, 69:246-257.
- Mewes R, Reich H, Skoluda N, Seele F, Nater UM (2017) Elevated hair cortisol concentrations in recently fled asylum seekers in comparison to permanently settled immigrants and non-immigrants. *Transl Psychiatry*, 7:e1051.
- Miller K, Rasmussen A (2017) The mental health of civilians displaced by armed conflict: an ecological model of refugee distress *Epidemiol Psychiatr Sci*, 26:129-138.
- Miller KE, Rasmussen A (2010) War exposure, daily stressors, and mental health in conflict and post-conflict settings: bridging the divide between trauma-focused and psychosocial frameworks. *Soc Sci Med*, 70:7-16.
- Ming X, De Jong MD (2021) Mental well-being of Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands during the COVID-19 pandemic: a survey investigating personal and societal antecedents. *Sustainability*, 13:4198.
- Paksoy S, Karadeniz M. (2016) Kilitte çalışan Suriyeli sığınmacıların sosyo-ekonomik yapısı üzerine bir araştırma, *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 15:789.
- Perruchoud R, Redpath-Cross J (2011) *Glossary on Migration*, 2nd edition. Geneva, International Organization for Migration.
- Ralli M, Cedola C, Urbano S, Morrone A, Ercoli L (2020) Homeless persons and migrants in precarious housing conditions and COVID-19 pandemic: peculiarities and prevention strategies. *Eur Rev Med Pharmacol Sci*, 24:9765-9767.
- Rothman S, Gunturu S, Korenis P (2020) The mental health impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on immigrants and racial and ethnic minorities. *QJM*, 113:779-782.
- Sağlık Bakanlığı (2020). Covid-19 Yeni Koronavirüs Hastalığı. <https://covid19bilgi.saglik.gov.tr/tr/>. (Accessed 06.02.2022)
- Salı J, Balaban M, Fatme F (2012) 1989 Bulgaristan göçmenlerinin kültürlerarası iletişim pratikleri: Eskişehir örneği. *Selçuk İletişim*, 8:5-34.
- Satinsky E, Fuhr DC, Woodward A, Sondorp E, Roberts B (2019) Mental health care utilisation and access among refugees and asylum seekers in Europe: a systematic review. *Health Policy*, 123:851-863.
- Saw YE, Tan EY, Buvanawari P, Doshi K, Liu JC (2021) Mental health of international migrant workers amidst large-scale dormitory outbreaks of COVID-19: A population survey in Singapore. *J Migr Health*, 4:100062.
- Singh GP (2021) Psychosocial and mental health issues of the migrants amidst Covid-19 pandemic in India: a narrative review. *Indian J Psychol Med*, 43:473-478.
- Slewa-Younan S, Uribe Guajardo MG, Heriseanu A, Hasan T (2015) A systematic review of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression amongst Iraqi refugees located in Western countries. *J Immigr Minor Health*, 17:1231-1239.
- Srivastava A, Arya YK, Joshi S, Singh T, Kaur H, Chauhan H et al. (2021) Major stressors and coping strategies of internal migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative exploration. *Front Psychol*, 12:648334.
- Steel Z, Chey T, Silove D, Marnane C, Bryant RA, Van Ommeren M (2009) Association of torture and other potentially traumatic events with mental health outcomes among populations exposed to mass conflict and displacement: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA*, 302:537-549.
- Ünal S. (2014) Türkiye'nin beklenmedik konukları: "Öteki" bağlamında yabancı göçmen ve mülteci deneyimi. *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken*, 6:65-89.
- UNHCR (2020a) Turkey key facts and figures. <http://www.unhcr.org/tr/unhcr-turkiye-istatistikleri> (Accessed 24.01.2022)
- UNHCR (2020b) Refugee data finder. <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics> (Accessed 02.03.2022)
- Velavan T, Meyer C (2020) The Covid-19 epidemic. *Trop Med Int Health*, 25:278-280
- WHO (2020a) Statement on the Second Meeting of The International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Geneva, World Health Organization.
- WHO (2020b) WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at The Media Briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020. Geneva, World Health Organization.

WHO (2020c) ApartTogether Survey: Preliminary Overview of Refugees and Migrants Self-Reported Impact of COVID-19. Geneva, World Health Organization.

Yee K, Peh HP, Tan YP, Teo I, Tan EUT, Paul J et al. (2021) Stressors and coping strategies of workers diagnosed with COVID-19 in Singapore: a qualitative study. *BMJ Open*, 11:e045949.

Authors Contributions: The author(s) have declared that they have made a significant scientific contribution to the study and have assisted in the preparation or revision of the manuscript

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was declared.

Financial Disclosure: No financial support was declared for this study.