

# Inequalities in suicides and suicide attempts for children of refugees in the early life-course

3. Epidemiology and surveillance

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## Abstract text

While refugees tend to have lower risks of suicide and suicide attempts, it is unclear to what extent these protective effects extend to the children of refugees, or if they experience inequalities compared to the native-born population without migrant ancestry. This study uses linked data from demographic registers and hospital registers for the population of Sweden, to address the following research questions:

1. How does the risk of suicide and suicide attempts for Swedish-born children of refugees (G2 refugees) compare to a) Swedish-born children of Swedish-born parents, b) Swedish-born children of non-refugee immigrants (G2 non-refugees), and c) refugees who arrived as children (G1.5 refugees)?
2. Do patterns vary by parental country of birth?
3. Are there any gender differences?

To examine suicides and suicide attempts in the early life-course, we focus on individuals born 1986-2009, and capture suicide-related outcomes from age 12 until year 2021 (maximum age 35) (N=2,314,456, of which n=149,420 were G2 refugees). For G2 refugees, we examine variation by parental countries of birth, focusing on the three most common origin countries. We use a discrete time event history approach and logistic regression analysis, adjusting for birth cohort.

G2 refugees were not at increased risk of suicides (OR=0.71, 95%CI:0.57-0.88) or suicide attempts (OR=0.90, 95%CI:0.86-0.94) compared to native Swedish population. However, there was substantial heterogeneity of suicide risk by parental country of origin and gender within this group. Female children of Iranian refugees and male children of Iraqi refugees had an increased risk of suicide attempts (OR=1.22, 95%CI: 1.05-1.41; OR=1.15, 95%CI: 0.92-1.44, respectively). The suicide risk was also substantially elevated for these groups, although there was less precision for these estimates (OR=1.34, 95%CI: 0.60-2.99; OR=1.55, 95%CI: 0.88-2.74, respectively). In contrast, male G2 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina had substantially lower risks of suicide (OR=0.50, 95%CI: 0.16-1.54) and suicide attempts (OR=0.40, 95%CI:0.26-0.63).