

Titel of the poster: Perceived causes of depression in Farsi-speaking migrants and refugees from Iran and Afghanistan living in Germany

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Abstract: An increasing number of migrants and refugees seeking asylum in Germany is challenging psychiatrists and psychotherapists in multiple ways. Different cultural belief systems on the causes of mental illness and their treatment have to be taken into consideration. Our aim in this interview-based study was to explore perceived causes of depression among Farsi-speaking migrants and refugees from Afghanistan and Iran, two groups with a shared cultural heritage, but originating from very different regimes of mobility. Both are among the largest migrant groups coming to Germany over the past decade. 50 Iranian and 50 Afghan migrants and refugees, who arrived in Germany in the last ten years were interviewed, using an unlabelled vignette presenting sign and symptoms of depression. Among Iranians, there was a larger number of causal attribution to Western psychiatric concepts, whereas Afghans attributed depression more often to the experience of being a refugee without referring to psychological concepts. These differences in attribution did however not affect the desire for social distance towards depressed people. However, a higher number of years spent in Germany reduced social distance towards persons with depression in Afghans, but not in Iranians.