

Abstract

Health Situation of Asylum Seekers from Burma in Thailand

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This paper provides a documentary review of the health situation of asylum seekers living in camps in Thailand. There are over 100,000 displaced persons living in camps along the western border of Thailand, most of who belong to the Karen ethnic minority. The situation of displaced persons has been of concern to the Thai government for a number of reasons, one of which is the issue of health care. The camp populations are young, with many camp members born and raised inside the camps. Health services in the camps are provided by NGOs, mainly using camp members who they have trained as health workers. Cases that cannot be handled by the camp medical system are referred to Thai health services. Over the years there has been a steady improvement in camp health conditions, particularly with regard to reproductive health services. While there could be even more improvement in this area, the achievements have been considerable. The paper identifies collaboration between the Government, NGOs, and other community groups as being essential in providing comprehensive health services to the migrant communities. Lessons learned in the camps can be used with migrant groups in order to improve the health of all – Thais and non-thais.