

# Hampton Roads Refugee Mental Health Evaluation

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# Introduction: Displaced Persons



This study focuses on:

- **Refugee:** Individuals who have crossed an international border while fleeing war, violence, conflict, or persecution, in order to find safety in another country (UNHCR).
- **Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) :** Individuals granted visas for their service to the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan (VDH).

# Background: Refugee Crisis

- There are currently 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.
  - Of these, 22.5 million people have refugee status, registered by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).
- In Virginia, there are approximately 20,000 refugees. In 2018 alone, 1285 refugees have resettled in Virginia.



CRISIS IN SYRIA

A BOY, A BOMB & THE HORRORS OF WAR & SURVIVAL

CNN

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AT THIS HOUR

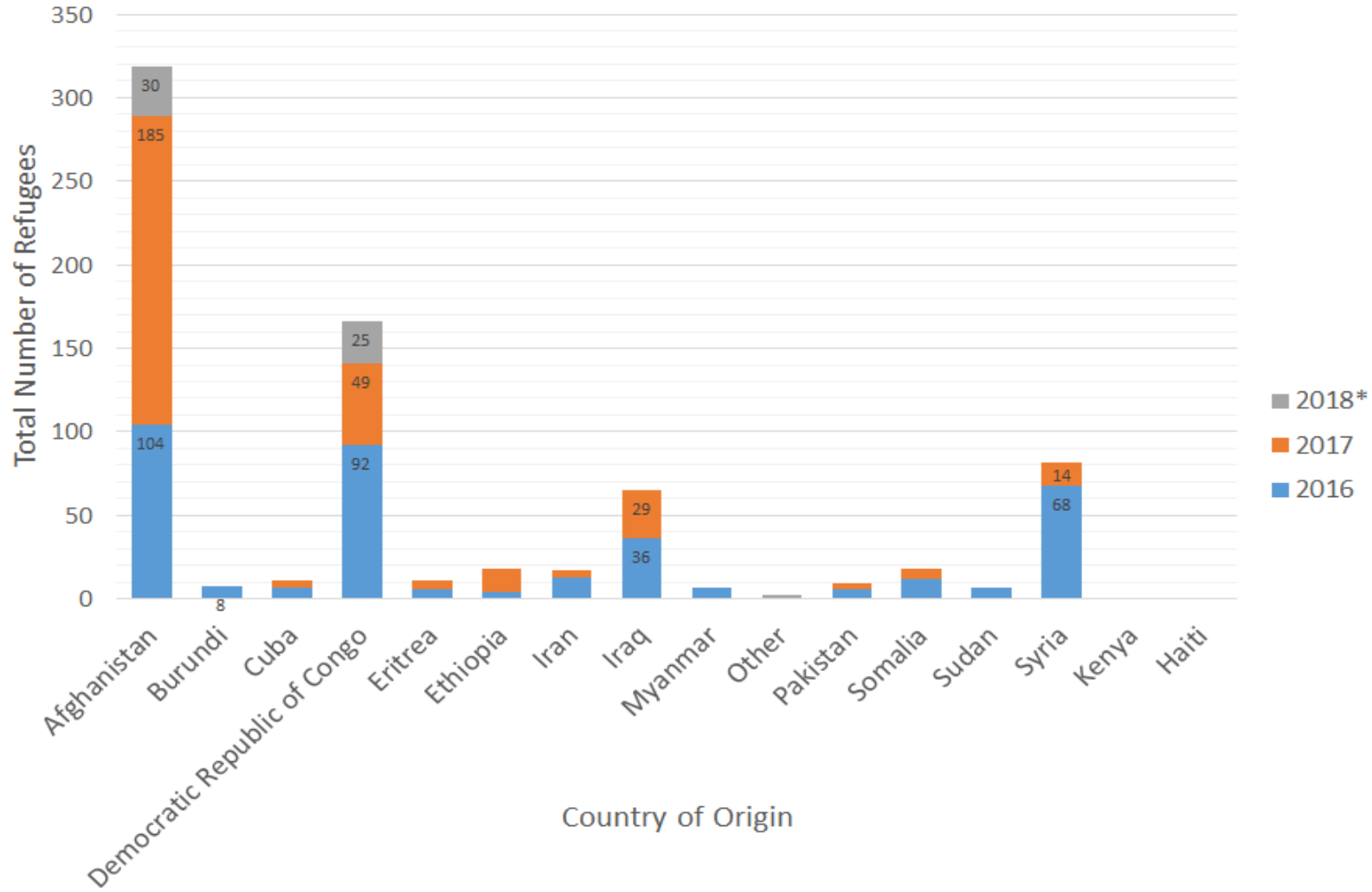
# Local Relevance: Refugees in Newport News

- Catholic Commonwealth Charities (CCC) of Hampton Roads has provided resettlement services to approximately 700 refugees from over 25 countries since 2014.



Commonwealth Catholic Charities

Refugee Resettlement in Newport News  
(1/1/2016 - 6/21/2018)



# Local Relevance: Refugees in Newport News

- As part of the intake process at CCC, a validated mental health screening tool, the Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15), is administered to each refugee over the age of 18.
  - The RHS-15 was empirically developed to be a valid, efficient and effective screener for common mental health disorders in refugees.

# Mental Health

- It has been demonstrated that refugees as a population are at risk for mental health illness
  - Most common mental health illnesses: depression, anxiety, and PTSD.
  - Refugees experience stressful events related to war, oppression, migration, and resettlement leading to distressing somatic and psychological symptoms.

# Health Data Gap

- There has been no analysis of the RHS-15 data collected in Virginia, making it difficult to assess the appropriateness of current refugee health resources and to target identified mental health needs of this population.





# Objective

- Analyze mental health screening data for resettled refugees in Newport News from 2016 to July 2018 to determine the prevalence of positive mental health screening results and associated variables.

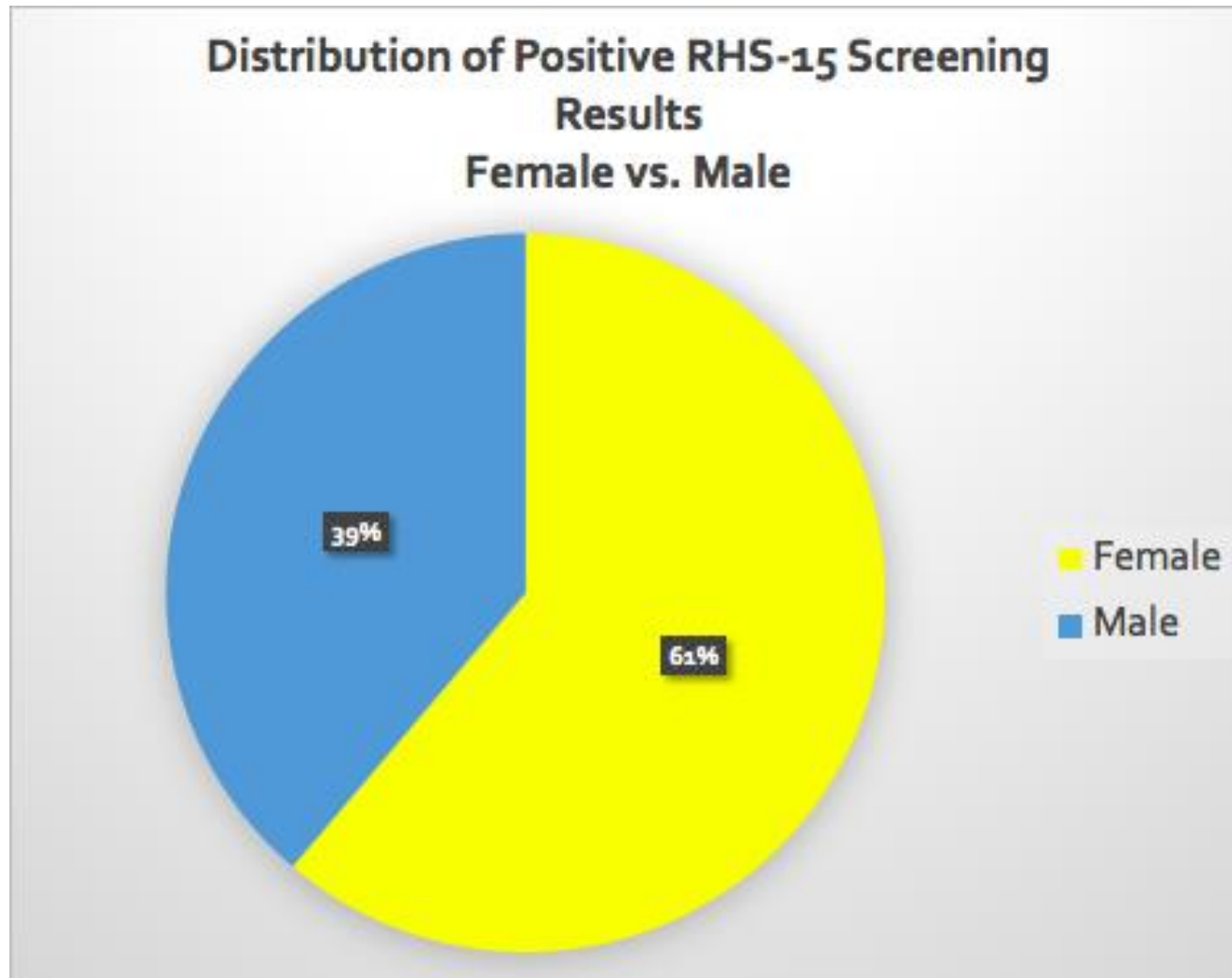
# Methods

- **Primary Outcome:**
  - Positive mental health screening results in the local refugee population.
- **Variables of Interest:**
  - Country of Origin
  - Gender
  - Prior Country of Asylum
  - SIV vs. Refugee
  - Age

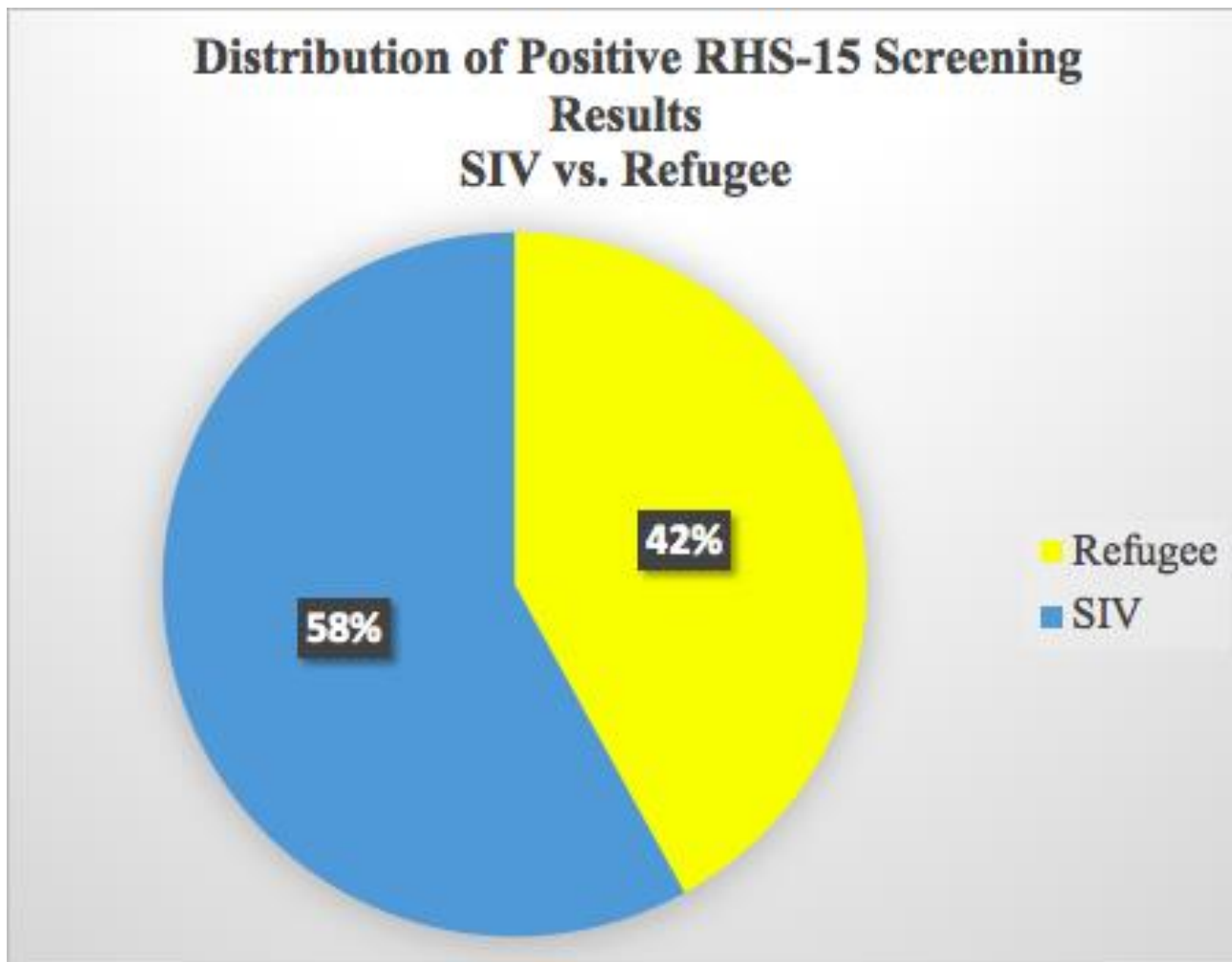
# Methods

- Retrospective chart review of 324 Refugees and SIVs between 18-89 years of age who completed the RHS-15 from 2016-2018.
- Metrics evaluated by the RHS-15 include:
  - Basic demographic information
  - Information on recent physical and mental symptoms
  - Symptoms related to traumatic experiences
  - Ability to cope with stress
  - Level of current distress (“distress thermometer”)

# Results:



# Results:



# Results Continued

- There was not any significant association between age and positive screen
  - With a large p-value the odds ratio is not significant. (OR=1.01).
    - 95% CI; p=0.60
- There was not any significant association between positive screen and whether country of asylum and country of origin were the same
  - With a large p-value, the odds ratio is not significant. (OR=1.38).
    - 95% CI; p=0.17

# Discussion/Conclusions

- Gender and SIV status were significantly associated with positive RHS-15 screening results
  - Odds of a male having a positive screening are 46% less than a female (OR=0.46).
    - 95% CI (0.28, 0.73) p=0.001.
  - Odds of a positive screen in an SIV is 176% more likely than in the refugee group (OR=1.76).
    - 95% CI (1.10, 2.83)p=0.019.

# Future Directions

- Implement follow-up screenings to evaluate results over time.
- Identify and implement appropriate mental health screenings for pediatric refugees.
- Further develop capacity to serve patients who screen positive.



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Questions?

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Thank you for your time!