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Rights, Health and Wellbeing"**

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Invisibility of children of asylum-seeking families in Iceland



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Introduction

- **Refugees seeking asylum in Europe has dramatically increased, incl. to Iceland**
 - 2015: 354 asylum applications (79 accompanied children)
 - 2016: 1132 asylum applications (249 accompanied children, 18 unaccompanied minors)
 - 2017 (15th of september) : 779 asylum applications (113 accompanied children, 23 unaccompanied minors)
 - **In line with CRC, children seeking asylum in Iceland should be given the same rights as other children**
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Aims

Describe and analyse how children's rights and their needs are taken into consideration during the asylum-seeking process of their families in Iceland



Methods

- **Purposive sample of 12 children and 10 parents**
 - Waiting for the outcome of their application, had gained refugee status, or had been granted humanitarian residence permit
 - **Qualitative methodology**
 - Semi-structured interviews
 - Facilitated by children's own photographs and drawings
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Results

- **The children had limited opportunities to express their opinion on issues of importance for them**
 - **Housing arrangement of service providers most often not child-friendly, or non existent**
 - **Wait for weeks or months to start school**
 - **Information about children's rights and what they may expect are not accessible for children**
 - **Little attention given to psychosocial wellbeing**
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Determinants for the psychosocial wellbeing of asylum seeking children

- **Family**
 - Mental health and isolation of the family
 - **School**
 - **Social involvement**
 - Friends *versus* loneliness
 - **Regret and nostalgia**
 - **Traumatic experience**
 - **Fear and anxiety about their future**
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Conclusion

- **The asylum-seeking process in Iceland for families in need of revision**
 - The asylum process is adultist in practice
 - **The Convention of the Right of the Child adopted into Icelandic law in 2013**
 - The best interests of the child are to be taken seriously
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