

EUFASA Working Group Children Children & Mental Health

EUFASA Conference Madrid 2023



WG CHILDREN

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- ERD



Children

Our children are the real “passengers” of our professional lifestyle.

Why should MFAs care?

If the family isn't OK, the professional side can't be OK either.

Family first!



Statistics...

...in brief

At least **one in seven** young people between the ages 10 and 19 worldwide has been diagnosed with a mental disorder (UNICEF, 2021).

Suicide is among the top five causes of death for this age group, taking the lives of almost **46,000** adolescents each year, according to UNICEF.

**Mental health of children
IS an important topic.**

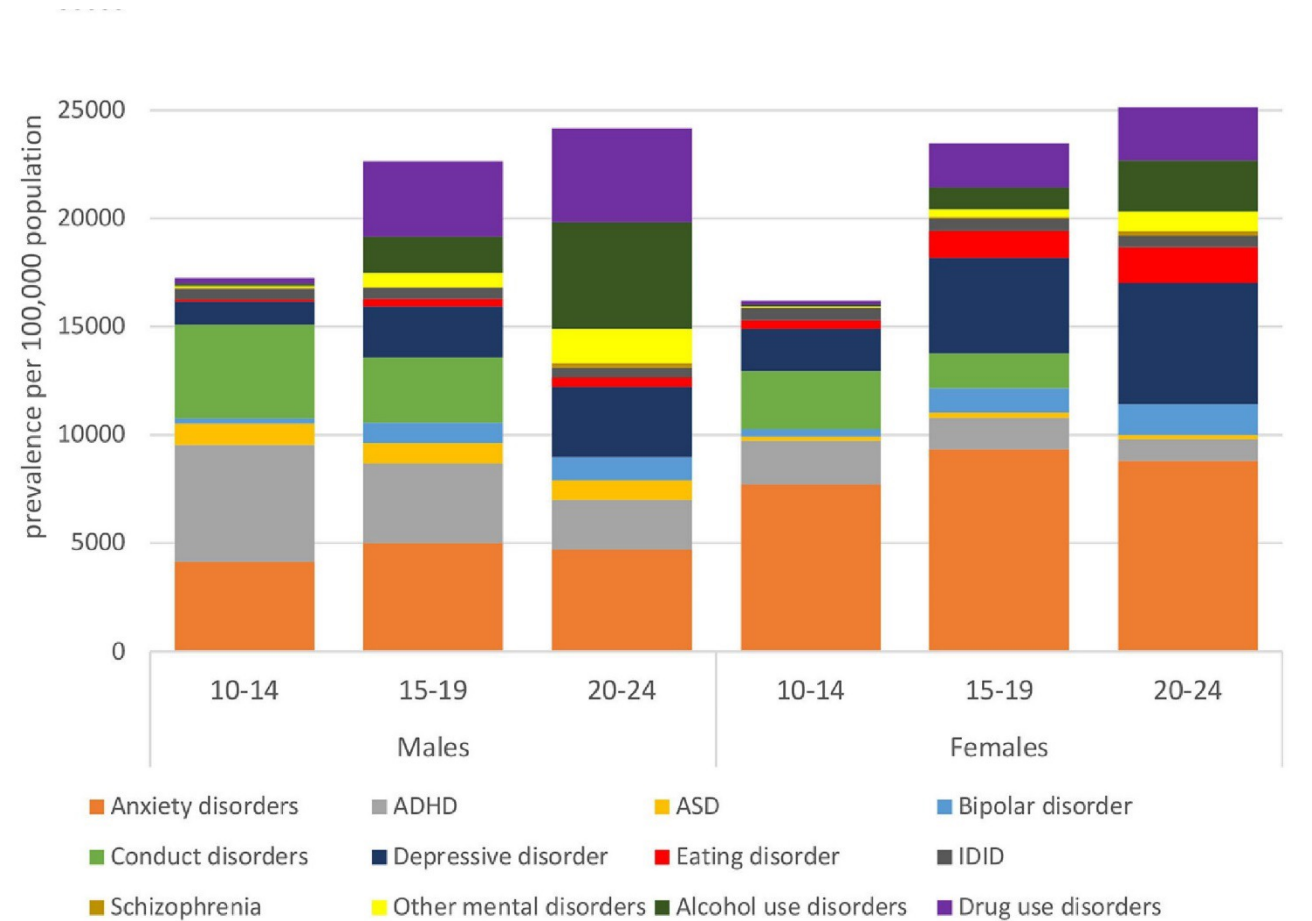


What are the most common mental disorders among children?

- depression
- anxiety
- conduct disorders

Mental illnesses have different prevalence in different age groups and genders.

Mental disorders of young people aged 10–24 years living in 31 European countries.



Global Burden of Disease Study 2019; data by age and gender, from Castelpietra et al, 2022

Let's ask an important question:

**Are the children of MFA
families
more vulnerable?**



What do our kids **have to face**?



Persistent need to adapt to **new situations** arising from career of the parent.



Permanent sense of **temporariness** in postings both in our home countries and abroad.



Particular **challenges** for children in terms of cultural and social uprooting.

What science and surveys say?

„More frequent moves during childhood and adolescence were associated with increased risk for nonaffective psychosis, peaking between age 16 to 19 years.“

„The change of residence disrupts an individual's ability to form and maintain friendships or fit within a peer group. Social isolation is likely to increase one's vulnerability to the effects of life stressors.

Ceri Price, MSc; Christina Dalman, PhD; Stanley Zammit, PhD // JAMA Psychiatry, 2018



What science and surveys say?

The ERD study on burnout and resilience conducted in 2021 and 2022 found lower resilience and higher burnout scores in the population of diplomatic partners than those in general population. It is safe to assume that these increased stress levels will most likely have an impact on children in families of diplomats.

Source:

Two years of COVID-19: Diplomatic partners and spouses during a pandemic, ERD/EUFASA, January 2023





Let's ask an important question again:

**Are the children of MFA
families **more vulnerable?****

YES!

Accessibility of mental health care

Access to mental health help is a big issue in almost every EU country, the problem has worsened during the COVID pandemic. If we seek help for kids, the help must be:

- quick
- reliable
- in the language kid (and family) is/are able to communicate well



We prepared... ...two questionnaires

We have sent questionnaires to family associations and to MFAs.
Our aim was to find out what MFAs and associations are doing for children in the matter of mental health.



We wanted to know...

- type of assistance provided (by MFA or FA)
- accessibility of assistance
- conditions
- costs



Survey results



11 /17



Eleven responding countries have **NO SOLUTION** for the children of MFA officers.

4 /12



Only 4 MFAs have official MFA policy/program for mental health of children, sharing with Association.

Survey results

type of service	countries
children psychologist in-house	-
psychologist in-house for adults	AT, CZ
children psychologist outsourced (managed by MFA)	AT, EST, PT, SWE
children psychiatrist outsourced (managed by MFA)	PT, SWE?
children psychologist outsourced (managed by FA)	CZ, ITA
children psychiatrist outsourced (managed by FA)	CZ
family mental health specialist outsourced by MFA	SUI
countries where insurance is mentioned as MH care	CZ, FIN, EEAS
no special service for MFA children	FRA, GER, IRL, LAT, LUX, NL, SLO, ESP, UK, FIN
no MFA replies	GER, ITA, LUX, NL, PT, ESP, SUI, IRL
official MFA policy/program for mental health of children	AT, EST, FRA, SWE

Replies received: Associations: **17**
MFA: **12** + Sweden

Surprising Replies

Children are referred to in-house specialist for adults.

We say: Children need specialists appropriate for their age!

Health insurance as a solution for some MFAs?

We say: Having health insurance results in a long waiting list. A solution with immediate attention is required.



Q & A





Get In Touch With WG Children



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