Annual Referral Health Care Report 2019

A summary report for secondary and tertiary health care provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon in 2019

OVERVIEW

Secondary and tertiary health care institutions in Lebanon are mostly private and cost is a significant access barrier. UNHCR has put in place Guidelines for Referral Health Care in Lebanon and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to support access to life saving and obstetric care and to manage the costs of care for refugees. The costs covered by UNHCR vary according to the cost of service provided. Additionally, UNHCR contracts a third-party administrator (TPA) to manage and audit referral care processes and costs.

As of December 2019, there are **914,648** Syrian refugees and **17,971** refugees from other countries registered with UNHCR. The referral care programme also supports access to life saving care for non-registered refugees.

- The total number of approved referrals decreased from **79,416** in 2018 to **65,513** in 2019. This is a decrease of **18%**. The decrease is believed to have been caused by several factors such as an overall decrease in number of deliveries, a shift towards primary health care utilization for conditions other than deliveries and reduced access as a result of country wide protests, deteriorated socio-economic situation and aggravation of the financial situation in the last quarter of 2019.
- The UNHCR network consisted for most of the year of **40** hospitals. The majority (**84%**) of accepted referrals were treated in **20** hospitals.
- **62%** of referrals were for maternity care (**63%** in 2018).
- The proportion of births through caesarean section was **33%** out of total deliveries (**33%** in 2018).
- Out of the total annual approved referrals there were **780** mortalities, of which **60%** were children under one year of age, predominantly in the perinatal period.

DATA

UNHCR, through the TPA, collected data on the coverage of hospital referrals. The data for accepted referrals include the diagnosis, care received, outcome and cost of the service.

IN NUMBERS

65,513 Referrals financially supported by UNHCR in 2019.

61,594 Beneficiaries supported by UNHCR with one or more referrals.

5,459 Monthly average of referrals supported by UNHCR.

78% Proportion of referrals of female patients, reflecting the high proportion of obstetric care (**78%** in 2018).

84% Proportion of accepted referrals in most utilized 20 hospitals.

SECTION 1: NUMBER OF REFERRALS

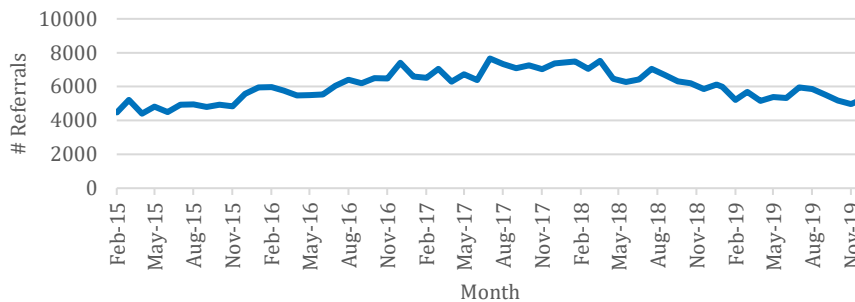FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF REFERRALS PER MONTH JAN 2015 – DEC 2019

Key Findings

Number of referrals per month stable throughout the year. Lower monthly numbers than in 2016, 2017 and 2018 but similar to the figure of 2015.

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF REFERRALS PER MONTH BY COVERAGE STATUS in 2019

□ Approved ■ Declined

1,725 referrals were declined support (2.6% of total). Most common reason for declining was that condition did not fit criteria set out in referral care guidelines (acute life-threatening, delivery etc.)

21 %
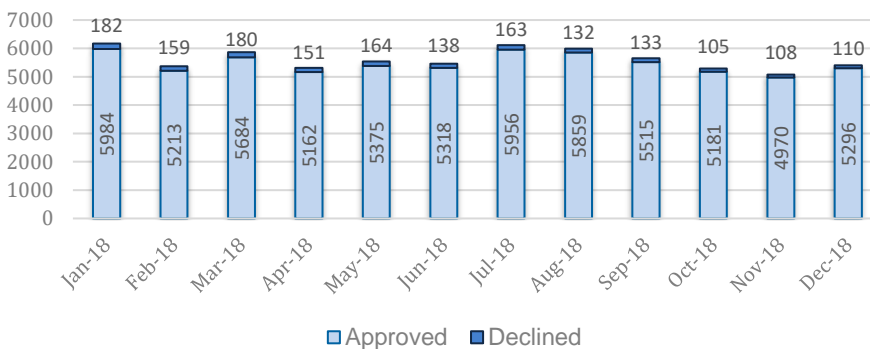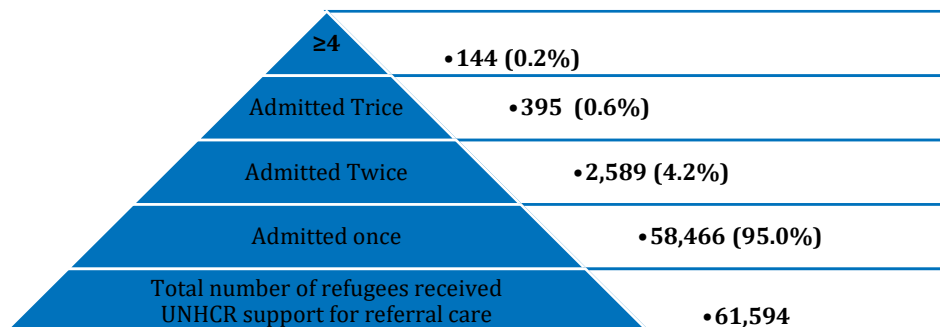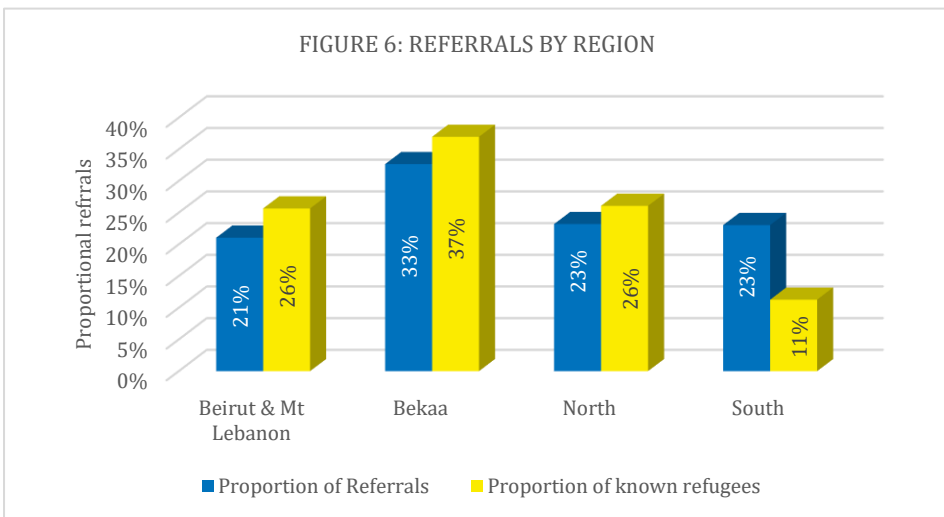Proportion of referrals of children <5 years of age (**22%** in 2018).

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF REFUGEES SUPPORTED AND FREQUENCY OF ADMISSIONS PER REFUGEE

≥4	•144 (0.2%)
Admitted Trice	•395 (0.6%)
Admitted Twice	•2,589 (4.2%)
Admitted once	•58,466 (95.0%)
Total number of refugees received UNHCR support for referral care	•61,594

5% of beneficiaries referred twice or more. The most common diagnosis for multiple referrals (4 or more/year) is blood- and immunological conditions. Possibly due to the need for repeated transfusions.

FIGURE 4: REFERRALS BY SEX AND AGE GROUP

Age group	Male	Female
< 1	5649	3758
1-4	2447	1624
5-17	2088	5024
18-59	3317	39438
> 60	1098	1070

■ Male ■ Female

FIGURE 5: PROPORTION OF REFERRALS AT THE 20 MOST FREQUENTED CONTRACTED HOSPITALS

Hospital	Proportion
Raee	8.7%
Taanayel	7.6%
Dr. Hamed Farhat	7.5%
Rafik Hariri Gov	5.8%
Bekaa	5.7%
Kassab	4.9%
Notre Dame De La Paix	4.7%
Tripoli Gov	4.7%
Iklim	4.3%
Sahel	4.1%
El Kheir	4.0%
Elias Haraoui Gov	3.5%
Nabih Berri/Nabatieh Gov	2.8%
Al Rayan	2.7%
Halba Gov	2.6%
Baalbek Gov	2.4%
Hanane	2.3%
Lebanese Italian	2.2%
Orange Nassau Gov	1.7%
Hermel Gov	1.6%

FIGURE 6: REFERRALS BY REGION

Region	Proportion of Referrals	Proportion of known refugees
Beirut & Mt Lebanon	21%	26%
Bekaa	33%	37%
North	23%	26%
South	23%	11%

Proportional refrrals

■ Proportion of Referrals ■ Proportion of known refugees

Key Findings

78%
Proportion of referrals of female patients, reflecting the high proportion of obstetric care (78% in 2018).

24.7 and 16.0 years
Mean age at admission for females and males respectively (24.6 and 15.2 years in 2018). The different means are due to the fact that the majority of females are referred for delivery while the majority of males are referred for perinatal reasons.

20 hospitals (out of 40 in the network) provided treatments to **84%** (82% in 2018) of all supported referrals

473
Average number of referrals per month to the hospital most frequented by refugees (Raee Hospital in Saida).

Percentage referrals to hospitals in South higher than percentage of refugees residing there. A number of large hospitals in Saida (Raii, Kassab) are receiving referrals from the rest of the country.

SECTION 2: REASON FOR REFERRALS

FIGURE 7: ICD-10 DIAGNOSTIC CATEGORY, AS PROPORTION OF APPROVED REFERRALS (N=65,513)
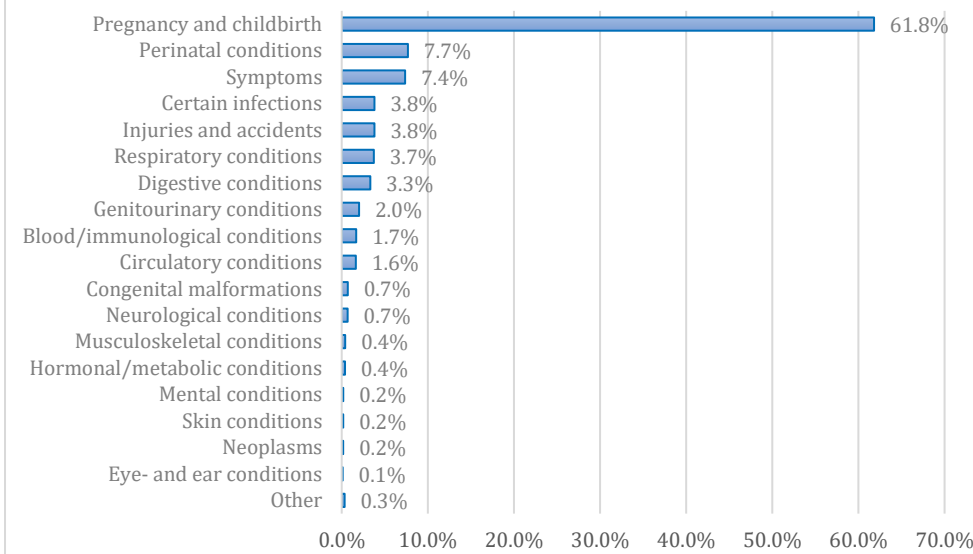
Category	Percentage
Pregnancy and childbirth	61.8%
Perinatal conditions	7.7%
Symptoms	7.4%
Certain infections	3.8%
Injuries and accidents	3.8%
Respiratory conditions	3.7%
Digestive conditions	3.3%
Genitourinary conditions	2.0%
Blood/immunological conditions	1.7%
Circulatory conditions	1.6%
Congenital malformations	0.7%
Neurological conditions	0.7%
Musculoskeletal conditions	0.4%
Hormonal/metabolic conditions	0.4%
Mental conditions	0.2%
Skin conditions	0.2%
Neoplasms	0.2%
Eye- and ear conditions	0.1%
Other	0.3%

FIGURE 8: PROPORTION OF SPECIFIC DIAGNOSES WITHIN CATEGORIES

FIGURE 8.1 Pregnancy and Childbirth

- Delivery (vaginal): 65%
- Delivery (C-section): 32%
- Condition with abortive outcome: 2%
- Other Obstetric: 1%
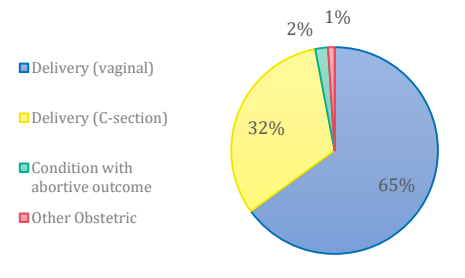
FIGURE 8.2: Perinatal Conditions

- Respiratory Disorders: 67%
- Jaundice: 15%
- Prematurity and Poor Growth: 8%
- Infections: 7%
- Other Perinatal: 3%

FIGURE 8.3: Symptoms

- Fever: 26%
- Respiratory Symptoms: 16%
- Chest Pain and Arrythmias: 20%
- Other Symptoms: 22%
- Abdominal Pain: 15%
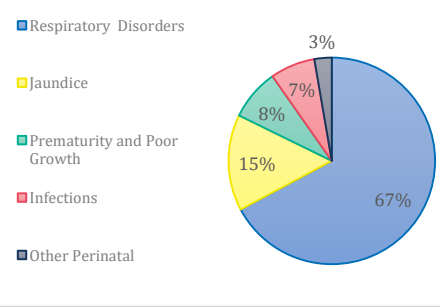
FIGURE 8.4: Certain infections

- Gastroenteritis: 95%
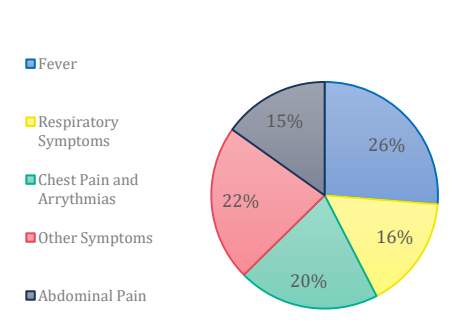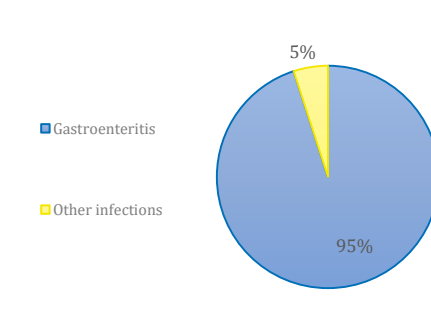- Other infections: 5%

Key Findings

40,495

Number of accepted referrals requiring pregnancy related care (62% of total referrals)

39,339

Number of referrals for delivery (60% of total referrals)

Proportion of referrals for pregnancy related care and deliveries remain stable, but total numbers of referrals have decreased (from 49,737 and 47,892 in 2018 for pregnancy related care and deliveries respectively). This is probably a reflection of a real decrease of deliveries in the community

33%

Proportion of deliveries by caesarean section remained stable (33% in 2018).

SECTION 3: MORTALITY

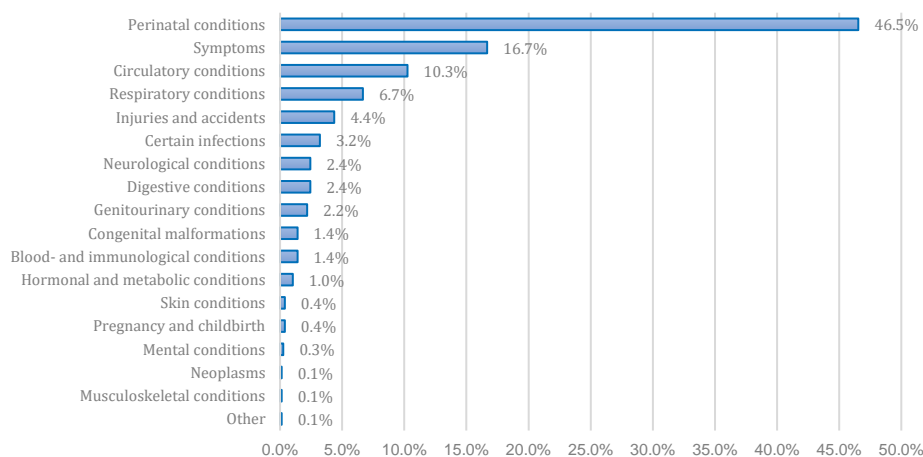## FIGURE 9: MORTALITIES BY ICD-10 DIAGNOSIS CATEGORY (N = 780)

Category	Percentage
Perinatal conditions	46.5%
Symptoms	16.7%
Circulatory conditions	10.3%
Respiratory conditions	6.7%
Injuries and accidents	4.4%
Certain infections	3.2%
Neurological conditions	2.4%
Digestive conditions	2.4%
Genitourinary conditions	2.2%
Congenital malformations	1.4%
Blood- and immunological conditions	1.4%
Hormonal and metabolic conditions	1.0%
Skin conditions	0.4%
Pregnancy and childbirth	0.4%
Mental conditions	0.3%
Neoplasms	0.1%
Musculoskeletal conditions	0.1%
Other	0.1%

FIGURE 10: MORTALITIES BY SEX AND AGE GROUP

Age group	Male	Female
<1 Y	266	200
1-4 Y	24	18
5-17 Y	13	8
18-59 Y	69	41
60+ Y	78	63

■ Male ■ Female
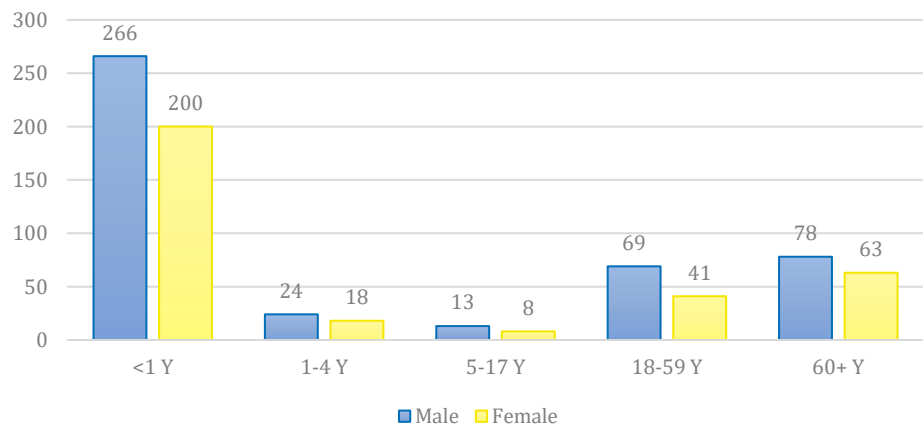
FIGURE 11: PROPORTIONAL MORTALITIES OUT OF ALL REFERRALS PER REGION

Region	Percentage
Beirut & Mt Lebanon	1.6%
Bekaa	0.9%
North	1.2%
South	1.2%

REGION
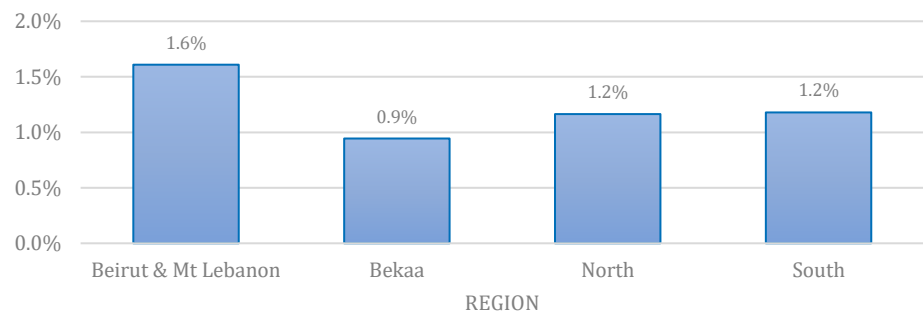
Key Findings

780 of beneficiaries referred died while hospitalized in 2019. Corresponding number for 2018 was 921 out of 79,416 referrals.

1.2% proportion of mortalities out of all referrals in 2019 (1.2% in 2018)

10% of deaths were due to cardiovascular disease (slight decrease compared to 13% in 2018)

60% of the 780 deaths occurred among children under one year of age (increase from 54% in 2018) The deaths happened mainly in the perinatal period and 15% were attributed to prematurity.

3 Maternal in-hospital mortalities among UNHCR supported referrals (7 in 2018). According to MOPH data that includes all maternal deaths among Syrian nationals, the number of maternal deaths were 10 in 2019 compared to 9 in 2018