**ABSTRACT FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Nome</th>
<th>Alessandro Barberio, Rafael van der Bergh, Georgios Makris, Giulio Castelpietra</th>
<th>Country/Paese</th>
<th>Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affiliation/Organizzazione</strong> (University/Agency/NGO)/(Università/Azienda/ONG)</td>
<td>Médecins Sans Frontières Dipartimento Salute Mentale di Trieste, ASUITS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address/Indirizzo</strong></td>
<td>Via Giulia 7, 34126 Trieste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phone-mobile/Telefono</strong></td>
<td>+39 3287148121</td>
<td>Fax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E-mail</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:barberio.alessandro@gmail.com">barberio.alessandro@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title of the contribution/Titolo del contributo</strong></td>
<td>Post-traumatic stress disorder with psychotic symptoms among asylum seekers attending the mental health clinic of Médecins Sans Frontières in Lesvos, Greece</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives/Obiettivi</strong></td>
<td>This study showed that psychotic symptoms associated with PTSD, and related to previous traumatic events, were prevalent in the population of asylum seekers on Lesvos Island attending MSF clinic; all patients improved in a few sessions through the use of a multidisciplinary approach and early interventions. The authors emphasize the importance of awareness of this clinical manifestation of PTSD and of rapidly distinguishing between reactive and chronic psychotic symptomatology. Moreover, the study findings indicated that an extremely vulnerable population, with a high degree of suicidal ideation, was administratively held in a containment camp in Lesvos, which offers limited or even no options for adequate protection and support of these individuals; an increased capacity to better host such individuals should urgently be put in place, and the improvement of support and protection of human rights of asylum seekers as well.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contents-text/Contenuto-testo:**

*Max. 400 parole/words*
Post-traumatic stress disorder with psychotic symptoms among asylum seekers attending the mental health clinic of Médecins Sans Frontières in Lesvos, Greece

**Investigators:** Alessandro Barberio¹, Maria Episkopou², Erin Schillberg³, Christos Diakos¹, Angeliki Zeri¹, Francisco de Bartolome Gisbert⁴, Declan Barry², Sara Giorgi⁴, Rafael Van den Bergh⁴, Georgios Makris², Giulio Castelpietra⁵

¹ Médecins Sans Frontières-Operational Centre Brussels, Lesvos, Greece  
² Médecins Sans Frontières-Operational Centre Brussels, Athens, Greece  
³ Canadian Public Health Service, Public Health Agency of Canada  
⁴ Medical Department, Médecins Sans Frontières-Operational Centre Brussels, Rome, Italy  
⁵ Psychiatric Clinic, Integrated University Health Authority, Udine & Primary Care Service Area, Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trieste, Italy

**Contact details of Principal Investigator:** Alessandro Barberio, barberio.alessandro@gmail.com, mobile +39 3287148121, address: via Giulia,7, 34126, Trieste, Italy

**ABBREVIATIONS**

GAF score: Global Assessment of Functioning  
DSMV: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition  
MDT: Multi-disciplinary team  
MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières  
NGO: Non-governmental organisation  
PTSD: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder  
PTSD+: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with psychotic symptoms  
PTSD-SP: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with secondary psychosis  
SSRI: Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor  
WHO: World Health Organization

**ABSTRACT**

[Abstract content here]
Background: Migrants and asylum seekers are particularly susceptible to severe and complex mental health disorders because of traumatic events and adverse circumstances before, during, or after their migratory journey. Here, we describe two cohorts of asylum seekers with PTSD in presence and in absence of psychotic symptoms, to better understand this complex symptomatology and propose ways forward for its management.

Methods: A retrospective quantitative study using routine programme data of asylum seekers diagnosed with PTSD with/without psychotic symptoms in a Médecins Sans Frontières mental health programme in Lesvos, Greece.

Results: 171 patients were included in the study: 44% with PTSD (as primary diagnosis), and 56% with PTSD combined with psychotic symptoms (PTSD+). Cases of PTSD+ tended to present earlier after arrival on Lesvos (72% within 3 months, versus 38%), and in a more severe state, as assessed by the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) score (median 25, versus 50). Cases of PTSD+ were more likely to be travelling from sub-Saharan Africa (92%, versus 70%). Psychotic symptoms tended to develop in Lesvos (59%), as opposed to during (5%) or before (15%) travel. Both conditions responded well to treatment: while a significantly higher proportion of PTSD+ cases required psychotropic medication (93%, versus 79%) and a higher number of sessions (median 8 versus 6), the GAF score at discharge/censoring was similar.

Conclusion: PTSD combined with acute psychotic symptoms was a common diagnosis in this population of asylum seekers in involuntary containment. Care protocols need to be updated to reflect the more complex treatment such cases require; additionally, as the conditions of involuntary containment on Lesvos do not allow their full rehabilitation, increased referral capacity off the island and more streamlined asylum processing are urgently required. Whether to include this particularity of psychotic symptoms in PTSD, or to consider this a particular psychiatric syndrome, cannot be decided on the basis of this study alone, and the authors call for multiple studies to better address this issue.

Keywords: mental health, PTSD, psychosis, migrant, Global Assessment Functioning.