Using Behavioural and Cultural Insights to Tailor Emergency Response

Martha Scherzer

9 February 2023

World Health Organization
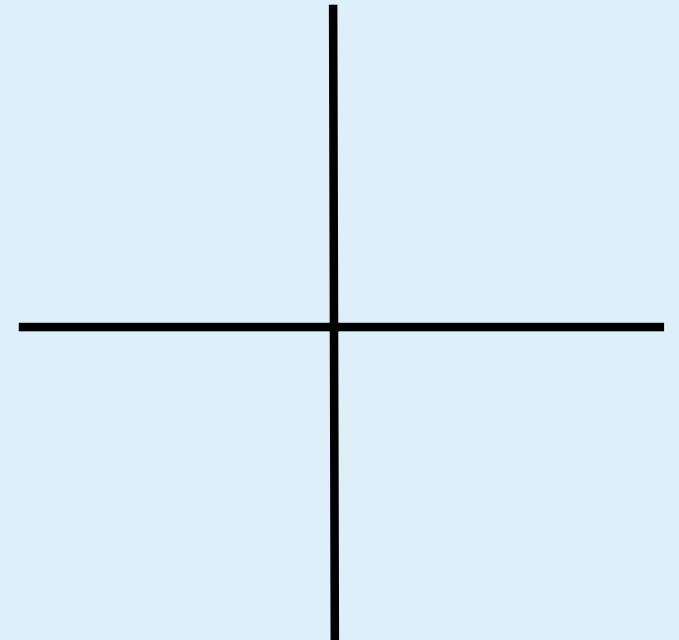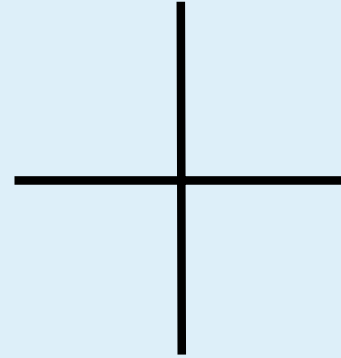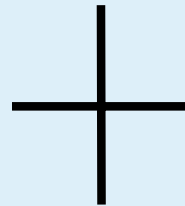
European Region

Behavioural and Cultural Insights (BCI)

Our definition:

systematically gaining **insights** into the contextual and individual factors that affect health behaviours

AND

using these insights to design, develop, implement and **evaluate** policies, services and communication that improve health and well-being and reduce inequity

World Health Organization

European Region

Behavioural and Cultural Insights Unit

- One of four flagships

- Recently passed resolution and action framework

- Tailoring health programmes approach

- Emergency and non-emergency

    o COVID-19

    o Ukraine

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME OF WORK
2020–2025

UNITED ACTION for
BETTER HEALTH

A guide to
Tailoring
Health
Programmes
(THP)

Using behavioural
and cultural insights
to improve the
outcomes of health
policies, services and
communications

World Health
Organization

European Region

COVID-19 Behavioural Insights Surveys

World Health Organization
European Region

4

- Standard protocol and questionnaire adapted in countries
- Quantitative, cross-sectional surveys
- Sample of 1,000 per round
- Representative of population: age (18+), sex and geographical distribution
- National and WHO ethical approval
- Variables include behaviours, perceptions, well-being, demographics
- Telephone (CATI), web-based interviews or a combination
- Evaluation underway
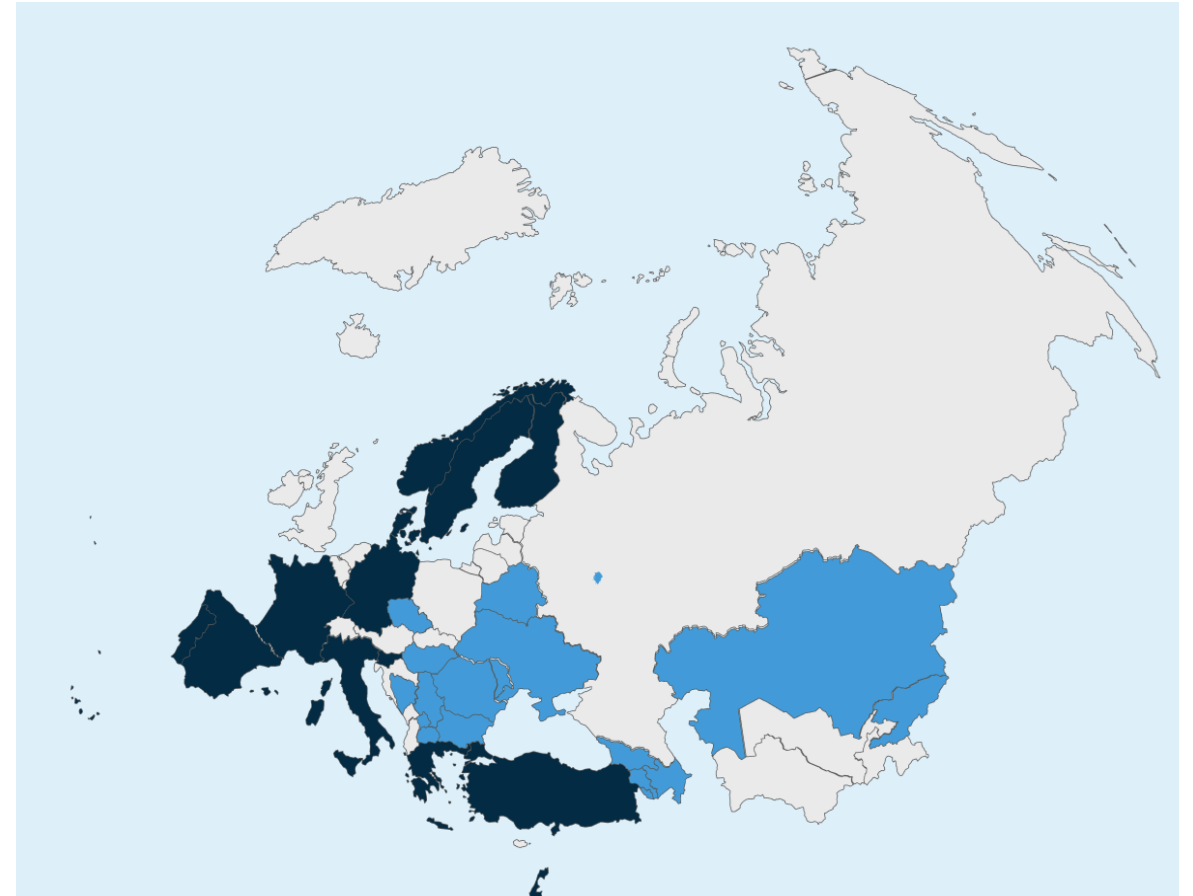
➢ 30 countries and areas in the Region have used the tool
➢ 18 countries with direct support from WHO Regional Office
➢ Data collection started in March/April 2020
➢ Over 120,000 individual voices heard from countries supported by WHO
➢ Community of Practice

World Health Organization

European Region

Health Literacy

Greater confidence in being able to find, understand and use health information contributes to:

- ✓ Higher vaccine intentions
- ✓ Greater likelihood of following PHSM
- ✓ Better well-being
- ✓ More positive emotional state
- ✓ Greater trust in health professionals

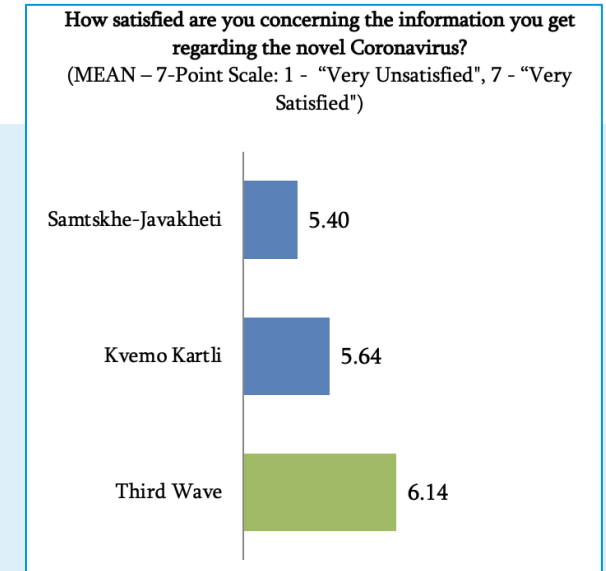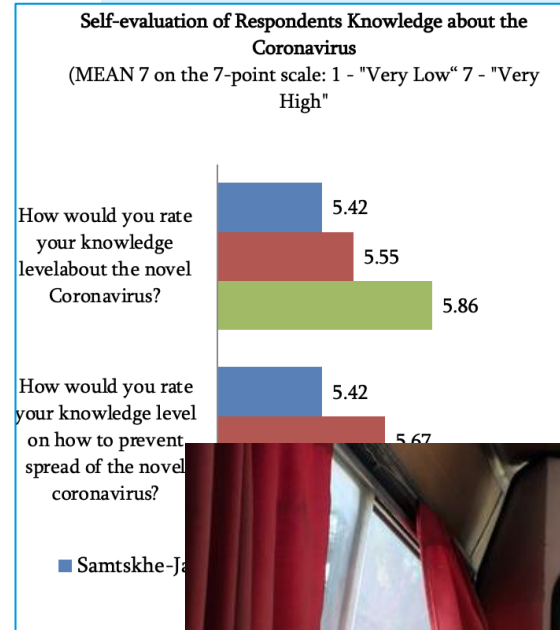**World Health Organization**

European Region

Tailoring action for minority populations

Insights:

In Georgia, data collected early in the pandemic showed that ethnic minorities were less aware of the virus, had lower risk perception than the majority population and used different media channels. People living in these areas needed information in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages shared through diverse channels.

Action:

These findings were used to inform targeted interventions for ethnic minorities, including engagement with local leaders and influencers to test and disseminate messages.
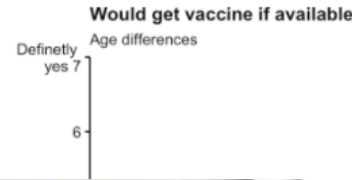
Self-evaluation of Respondents Knowledge about the Coronavirus
(MEAN 7 on the 7-point scale: 1 - "Very Low" 7 - "Very High")

How would you rate your knowledge level about the novel Coronavirus?
- 5.42
- 5.55
- 5.86

How would you rate your knowledge level on how to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus?
- 5.42
- 5.67

■ Samtskhe-Ja...

How satisfied are you concerning the information you get regarding the novel Coronavirus?
(MEAN – 7-Point Scale: 1 - "Very Unsatisfied", 7 - "Very Satisfied")

Samtskhe-Javakheti — 5.40

Kvemo Kartli — 5.64

Third Wave — 6.14

World Health Organization
European Region

Informing RCCE for COVID vaccination campaigns

Insights:

BI data showed that young people were less likely to follow recommended PHSM and were consistently less likely to say they would get vaccinated. As this population became eligible for vaccination in Moldova, special efforts were needed to increase acceptance.

Action:

The CO engaged with universities and the Association of Medical Students and Residents to implement a peer-to-peer campaign. Medical students visited each university to encourage students to get vaccinated both in person and online. "Put your shoulder in" visuals were shared throughout the campaign, through social media and other networks.

PUNE UMĂRUL, VACCINEAZĂ-TE !

NU AMÂNA VACCINAREA, FII EROUL GENERAȚIEI TALE!

Would get vaccine if available
Age differences

Definetly yes 7

6

Campanie organizată în cadrul Acțiunii comune UE–OMS de susținere a vaccinării împotriva COVID–19

World Health Organization

European Region

Informing RCCE for COVID vaccination campaigns

Insights:

In Kosovo*, the BI survey and vaccine segmentation analysis showed that over 60% of respondents expressed willingness to vaccinate but had concerns about side effects, safety, and effectiveness of the vaccines.

Action:

The WHO Pristina Office shared these results with international partners, and JICA took action. Working with famous Kosovar Olympians, a series of videos were created to emphasize that the strongest and healthiest people in Kosovo trust COVID-19 vaccines and are already vaccinated.

All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Trust

People who trust the government and other institutions are more likely to follow recommended behaviours.

Data allow for analysis of characteristics of those who trust or don't trust the institutions or information.

Increasing transparency

Action:

In Slovenia, IPH embarked on a *transparency strategy* to build trust. BI data is made publicly available on an interactive website, providing clear and transparent communication of data as a means to build trust in the response overall and particularly in the vaccination campaign.

The online dashboards provides the latest data on vaccinations and gives detailed insight into the progress of vaccination among different populations. Its official "speedometer" showing the increasing vaccination rate works as a motivator for collective action against COVID-19.

Data from the dashboard are used almost daily in the media.

Protective Behaviours

In Denmark, there was heated discussion about the introduction of masks.

BI survey data was presented from both Germany and Denmark showing that mandating mask use would result in high uptake of mask wearing and other PHSM.

Based on this and other data, the Danish government introduced a mask mandate on public transportation.
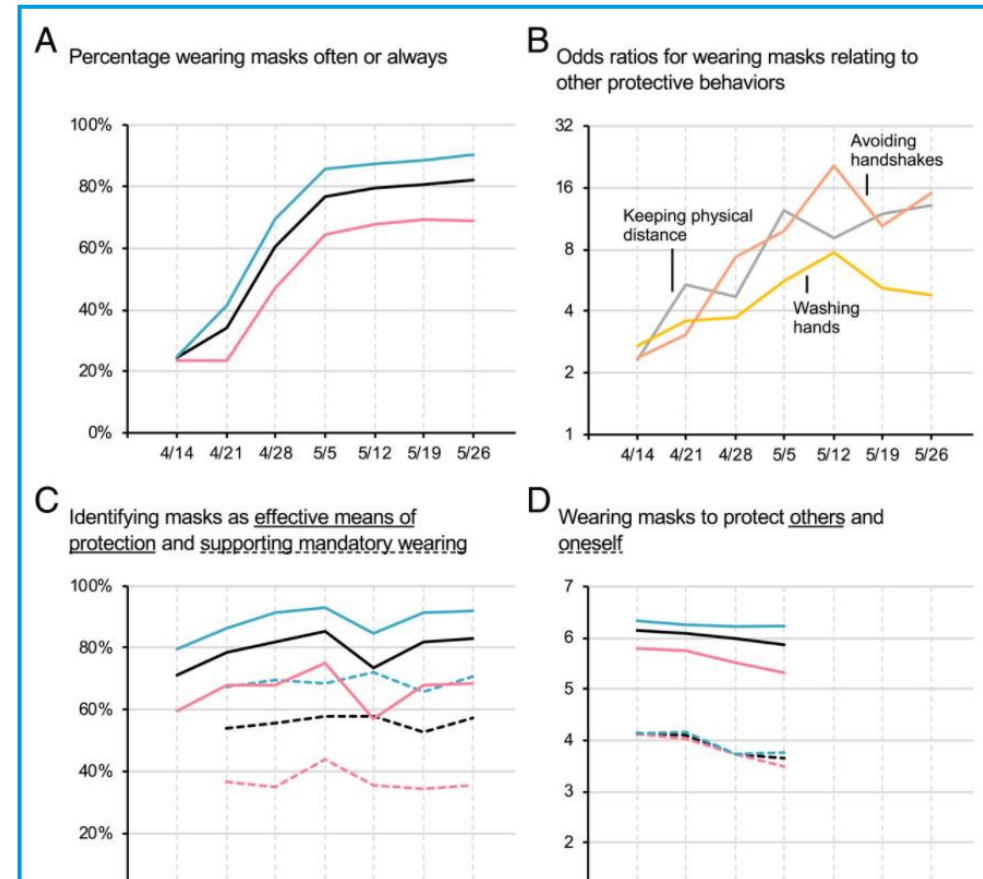
Data from Germany, showing that after mask wearing became mandatory in public transport and shops use increased steeply. For people wearing masks, the probability of hand washing was between 2.71 and 7.73 times greater than for people not wearing masks; for handshakes, the probability was between 2.37 and 20.50 times greater; and, for physical distancing, odds were between 2.32 and 13.13 times greater. See also https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2011674117

Qualitative Study Among Refugees From Ukraine

- **Qualitative study designed** to gain insights into behavioural and cultural factors impacting access to and uptake of health services by people fleeing Ukraine, with the intention of **informing the response** in neighbouring countries.

- **In-depth interviews** conducted online beginning in May 2022 with follow up interviews 3 months later.

- **Ukrainian research company** collecting and analysing data.

- Participants represent diversity across **age, location, lodging (formal/informal), education and caretaker role**

- Key findings reveal **many similar issues across the countries** but also marked differences, particularly in how welcome and accepted refugees feel.

- Results shared with governments and other stakeholders with **recommendations for action.**

World Health Organization

European Region
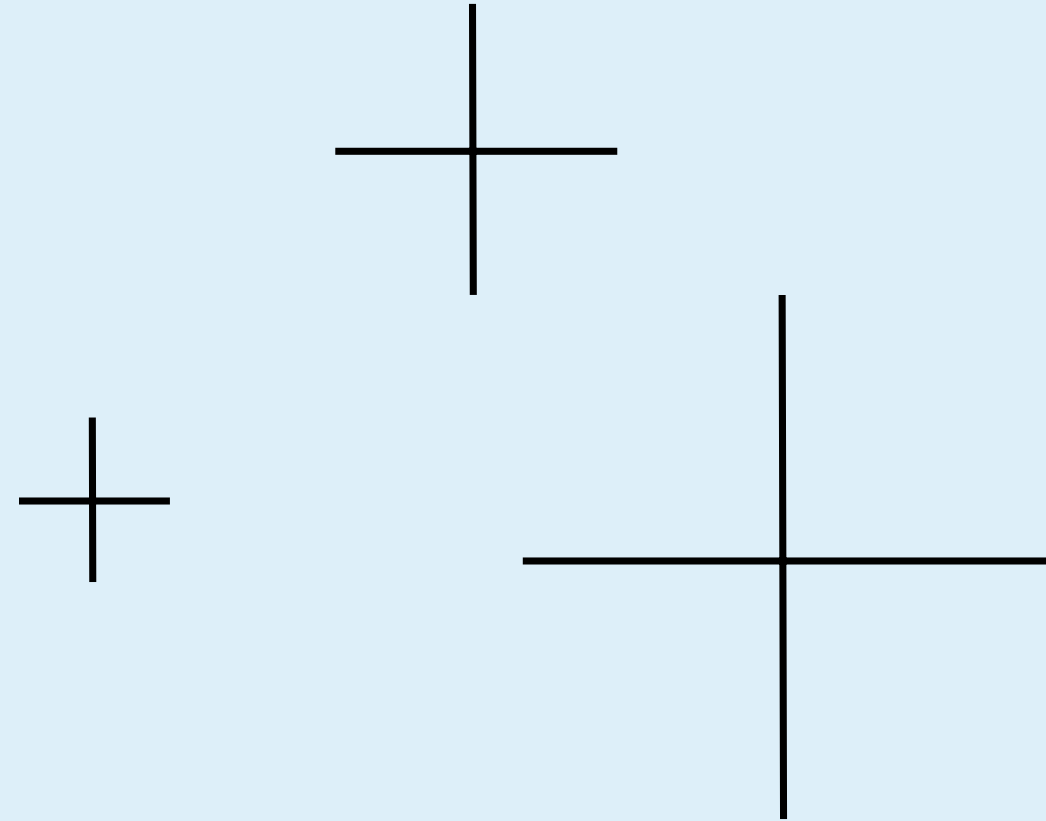
10 key findings across countries

There is confusion related to the **referral systems** and frustration with long wait times for appointments and services, although many refugees realize that citizens also face such frustrations.

Medications are challenging for many due to the need for prescriptions and cost; some take less of their medication to make it last or travel back to Ukraine to purchase. **Dentistry** is also considered too expensive.

Many are **mothers** who are alone with their (sometimes infant) children, and some of those children have special needs, which adds to complexity. Extra support, such as childcare options, are highly valued.

Language is a barrier for many, as well as lower **health literacy**, especially for those who are older, have chronic illnesses and lower socioeconomic status.

Many people ask for more information and guidance about **vaccination,** both schedules for routine immunization and specialized adult vaccination (COVID, encephalitis).

Those who have chronic diseases and/or other **special needs** struggle to receive necessary care and information. Programmes that link people directly to health services (such as medevac, civil society groups supporting people with disabilities) are highly valued and effective.

Mental health services are offered in many places, but barriers relate to motivation (thinking others need it more), practical issues (no one to take care of children) and structural issues. Individual counselling is preferred over group counselling.

Refugees **trust** information from other refugees; social media is used frequently for this kind of sharing, but informal, face-to-face communication is also an important channel.

Ukrainians are **grateful** for the warm welcome they have received in neighbouring countries. Support comes especially from individual citizens of host countries, volunteers and civil society organizations. However, some participants recognize growing **'refugee fatigue.'**

The **term 'refugee'** is controversial. People often don't identify as such and might refuse services that are promoted with that heading.

Translating Findings into Action

Considerations: information

Ensuring correct and needed can help to

- mitigate burden on health s... emergency services
- ensure compliance with hea... structures and processes
- mitigate burden on volunte... organizations
- ensure refugees' needs are... can create trust and social...

Possible pathways

Considerations: Ukrainian H...

Trust in Ukrainian doctors potential which can be tap...

- help overcome language
- reduce burden on health
- reduce level of anxiety a...
- over time build better un... Romanian health system... communities

Expec...

WHO C...
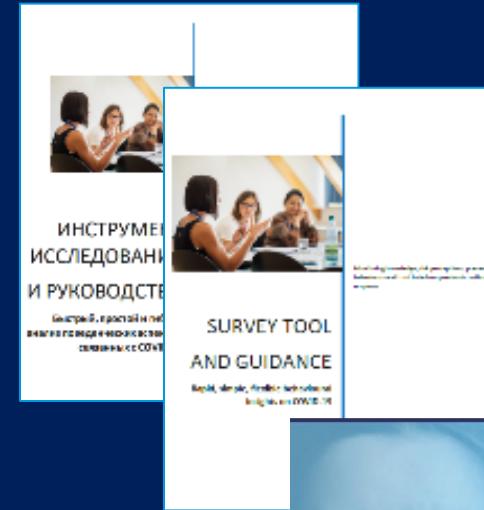
- Suppo...
- Video showing how to use health system
  - Video showcasing work of volunteers
- Joint press release from MoH and WHO CO about positive findings
- Intercultural sensitivity training for GPs

Understanding the obstacles faced by Ukrainian refugees in Romania

https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/17-01-2023-understanding-the-obstacles-faced-by-ukrainian-refugees-in-romania

World Health Organization

European Region

16

Collecting, analysing and applying behavioural and cultural insights as part of preparedness, readiness and response allows for tailoring and revising actions to best suit the context.

World Health Organization

European Region

The BCI Unit

Martha Scherzer
Consultant
Emergencies

Nils Fietje
Technical Officer, P4
Culture and arts

Tiina Likki
Technical Officer
Behavioural insights, evaluation

Sandy Neale
Programme Assistant

Katrine B. Habersaat
Regional Advisor

Anastasia Koylyu
Technical Officer, P3
Health literacy

Josefine Jakobsen
Consultant
BCI capacity building

World Health Organization
European Region

Thank you

For more information, please contact:
Martha Scherzer, WHO European Regional Office scherzerm@who.int
Katrine Habersaat, WHO European Regional Office habersaatk@who.int

World Health Organization

European Region