

**“Changes in mental health status amongst children of migrants to Australia: a longitudinal study”**

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the mental wellbeing of children of Australian migrants. Migration can be viewed as a natural experiment in which persons of one culture have their beliefs, values and behaviours challenged by the host culture. Such a process could be expected to lead to impaired mental health amongst migrants and their children. This paper investigates the relationship between migrants' region of origin, length of stay in Australia and indicators of impaired mental health. The data were taken from the Mater-University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy (MUSP), a longitudinal study of mothers and children which started in Brisbane, Australia, in 1981. The study comprises a cohort of over 5,000 women interviewed at their first ante-natal clinic visit and followed up at 3–5 days, six months, 5 and 14 years after the baby was born. Results showed no significant differences between the mental health of 'second generation' children and their Australian counterparts. Length of stay in Australia was not associated with internalising symptoms (anxiety and depression). There was a positive association, however, between the length of stay in Australia and increased externalising problems (aggression and delinquency) amongst the children at both 5- and 14-years follow-up. We conclude that children of migrants do not differ from comparable children of Australian-born parents in their mental health. Children of migrant parents have fewer symptoms of some behaviour problems in the years after their arrival in Australia, but these rates increase to the Australian level over time.