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Health, social integration and social support amongst young middle-eastern refugees living in Melbourne, Australia

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Situated within the therapeutic landscape theory, this paper examines how young Middle-Eastern refugee individuals perceive their health and wellbeing. The paper also addresses the barriers they face in their new homeland and the means that help them to form social connections in their new social environment. Qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and mapping activities) were conducted with ten young people from refugee backgrounds. Thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data. Findings suggested that the young refugees face various structural and cultural inequalities that significantly influenced their health and wellbeing. Mental health wellbeing was their greatest health concern. All reported the significant influence the English language had on their ability to adapt and form connections with their social environment. The presence of positive social support in their new social environment had a great impact on the health and wellbeing of the participants. The findings of this study contributed to the role of therapeutic landscapes and social support in helping young refugees to feel that they belonged to the society, and hence assisted them to adapt to their new living situation.

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