

Health Needs Survey for Ukrainian displaced persons and refugees

Initial report on household composition, accommodation, and well-being

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Note that this survey is not representative of the Ukrainian population or refugees¹. The survey underrepresents those fleeing from the east of Ukraine, older respondents, and the most vulnerable IDPs with acute health conditions.

Executive summary

- The vast majority of our respondents are women, with a mean age of 42.4 years.
- According to our survey, Internally Displaced Persons still in Ukraine (IDPs) are mostly from Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Donetsk regions, while refugees living abroad are more likely to be from Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Dnipro regions.
- On average, IDPs and refugees have fled with their families and live with others. The average household size for IDPs is 4.4 persons, while it is 3.5 persons for refugees. 65% of respondents have responsibility for at least one minor. 28% of IDPs and 16% of refugees have caring responsibilities for at least one person aged 18+. IDPs are more likely to care for more people over the age of 18 (on average, 1.4 persons) than refugees (1.2 persons).
 - » Many displaced persons have caring responsibilities, which will make it more difficult for them to find employment or integrate into the host society.
- Most refugees live with locals or people they knew before the war, while internally displaced persons (IDPs) are more likely to live with someone they knew or in private rentals.
 - » Most living situations are not permanent and potentially overcrowded. Eventually displaced persons must find new accommodation or return home. Although most respondents agreed that they would eventually go home, it is unknown how long the war will last, or when they will be able to return.

1. The survey uses snowball sampling methods combined with recruitment through Facebook advertising. We targeted Ukrainian speakers, specifying that we were interested in those who were displaced from home. Analyses of the Ukrainian population based on Facebook, suggests that Facebook penetration is greater in Western and Central Ukraine, and among those in their 40s-50s, particularly women (Leasure et al. 2022).

- Over 90% of respondents reported leaving behind a close relative. Nearly half of the displaced were separated from partners. 25% of IDPs and 14% of refugees reported leaving behind at least one son.
 - » Ties back to Ukraine are strong, and refugees will continue to be worried about those left in danger.
- Most IDPs and refugees are satisfied with their living conditions, although 30% of IDPs said they were not satisfied. Over 80% of refugees reported feeling safe, while 60% of IDPs felt safe.
- Receipt of welfare payments varies greatly by country. The vast majority of refugees in Czechia and Germany reported receiving welfare payments, while very few in southern Europe had received payments. About 30% of IDPs in Ukraine reported receiving welfare payments.
 - » Many countries need to strengthen access to welfare payments and employment schemes to avoid refugees falling into poverty.
- Although displaced persons generally reported average or good levels of overall health, 20% of IDPs reported poor or very poor health. Mental health, however, was much worse for all, with a large proportion feeling anxious and experiencing flashbacks.
 - » Receiving countries and IDP settlement areas must provide trauma counselling and support for mental health as a priority.

PART I: Where are people located?

The vast majority of displaced persons are internally displaced women (~30%) and men (~6%), mostly from the Kyiv, Kharviv and Donetsk regions. Among those displaced outside Ukraine, refugees are mainly located in Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic within EU states (Fig. 1), with over 60% coming from Kyiv, Kharviv and Dnipro. There is no difference in terms of top three countries of destination by schooling level or arrival date. Over 80% of IDPs and refugees are located in urban centres.

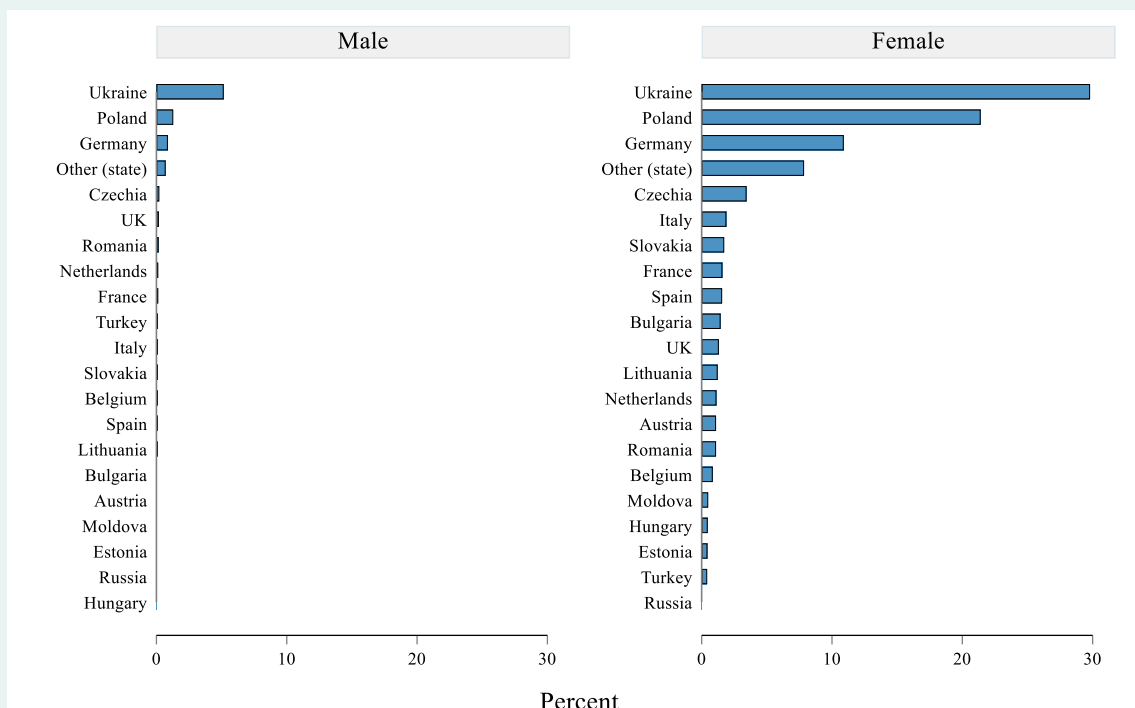


Figure 1: Location of survey respondents, by gender

Note: Sample includes respondents who reported their gender.

Among those displaced, refugees are mostly living in accommodation provided by locals in the hosting country or by people they knew before the war. Similarly, internally displaced are mainly hosted by family or friends they knew before the war. Over 22% of all displaced persons reside in privately rented accommodation (27% of IDPs and about 20% of refugees, Fig.2), whereas 10% in housing designated for refugees/IDPs.

Refugees are significantly more likely than IDPs to live in housing dedicated to displaced persons and with local hosts, but less likely to stay in rented accommodations and with persons they knew before the war.

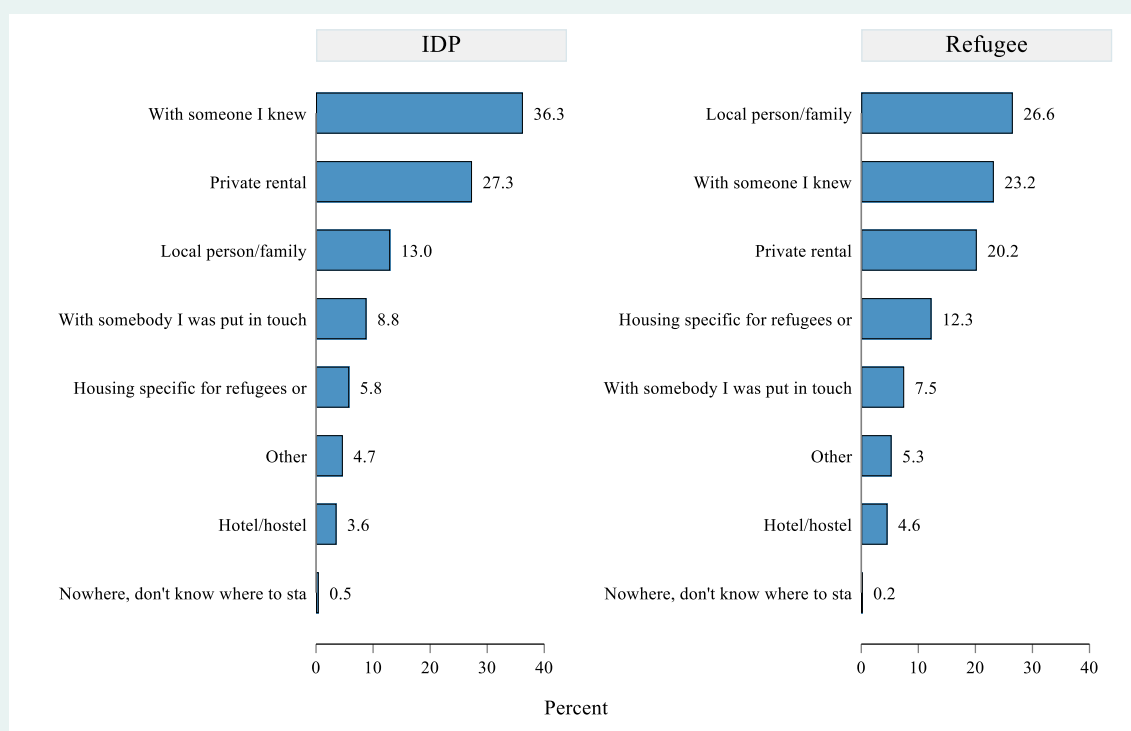


Figure 2: Accommodation type, by displacement status

PART II: Household composition

IDPs and refugees live with on average 3.4 and 2.5 persons, respectively, although, there is slightly larger variation in the former group (Fig. 3). About 30% of IDP households include one child under the age of 5, and 6% include 2 or more under-5 children. Similarly, the proportion of refugee households with one and 2+ under 5 children are 29% and 5% respectively.

59% of IDP respondents and 68% of refugee said that they have caring responsibilities for at least one child under-18. Overall, 65% of respondents have responsibility for at least one minor.

As for adults, 28% of IDPs and 16% of refugees reported having caring responsibilities for at least one person aged 18+. Among these groups, the majority reported having to care for only 1 adult (74% IDPs, 84% refugees), while the rest cared for 2 or more. For refugees who have caring responsibilities, accommodation type is mainly with locals in the hosting country or in private rentals.

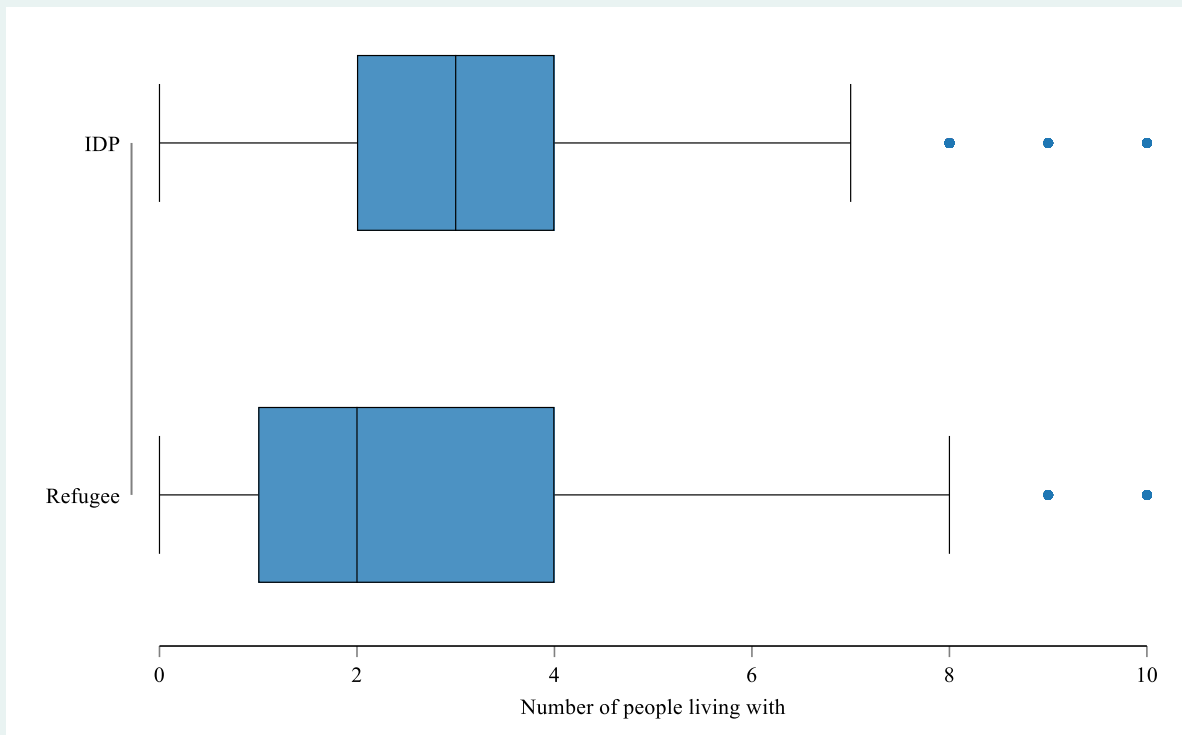


Figure 3: Average household size, by displacement status

PART III: Left behind

The vast majority of displaced reported having left some relative in their origin area (>90%). Generally, both IDP and refugee respondents had to leave older persons behind (e.g., parents, grandparents or in-laws).

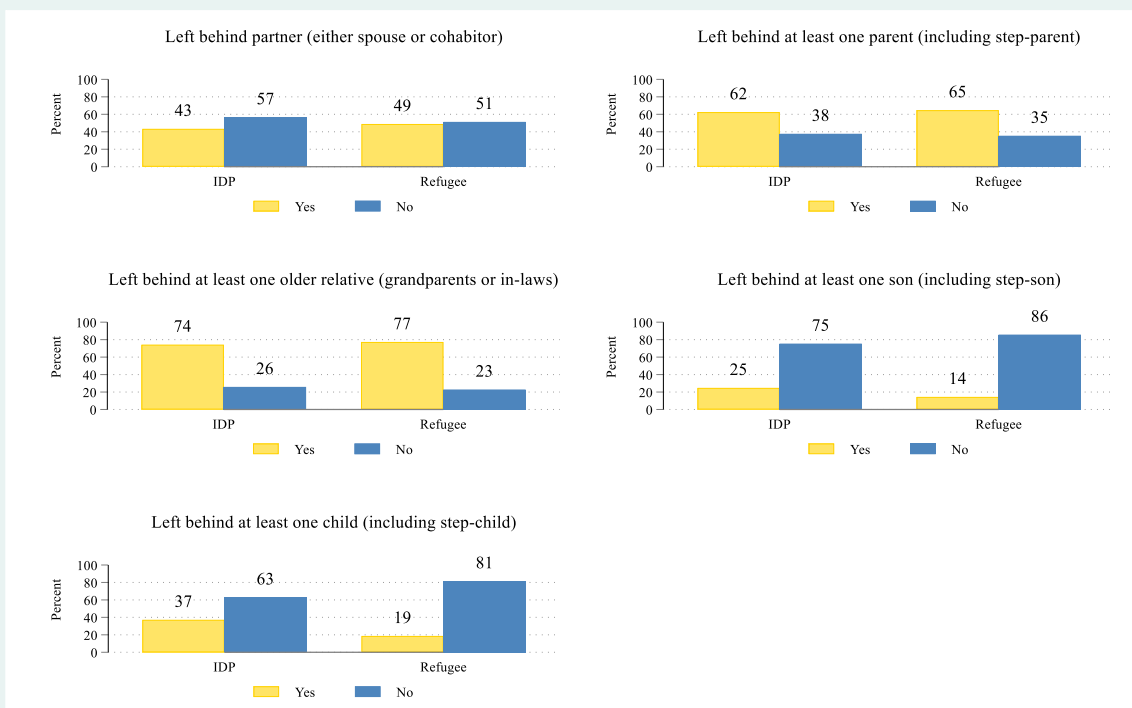


Figure 4: Relatives left behind, by displacement status

While less likely, still about 25% of IDPs and 14% of refugees reported having to leave at least one son in their location of origin. Overall, 37% and 19% for IDPs and refugees respectively had to leave at least one child (may include sons) in their origin location. Nearly half of the displaced were separated from their partners (Fig.4). Among those who cohabited or were married before the war, 54% and 61% respectively were separated from their partner.

PART IV: Satisfaction with living conditions

More than 30% of IDPs stated that they are not satisfied with their living arrangements compared with about 22% of refugees. The vast majority of refugees (>60%) said that they are satisfied with their living conditions (Fig.5). Refugees are also more likely to feel safe in the new community than IDPs (over 80% vs. nearly 60%), despite both groups reporting good levels of safety perception.

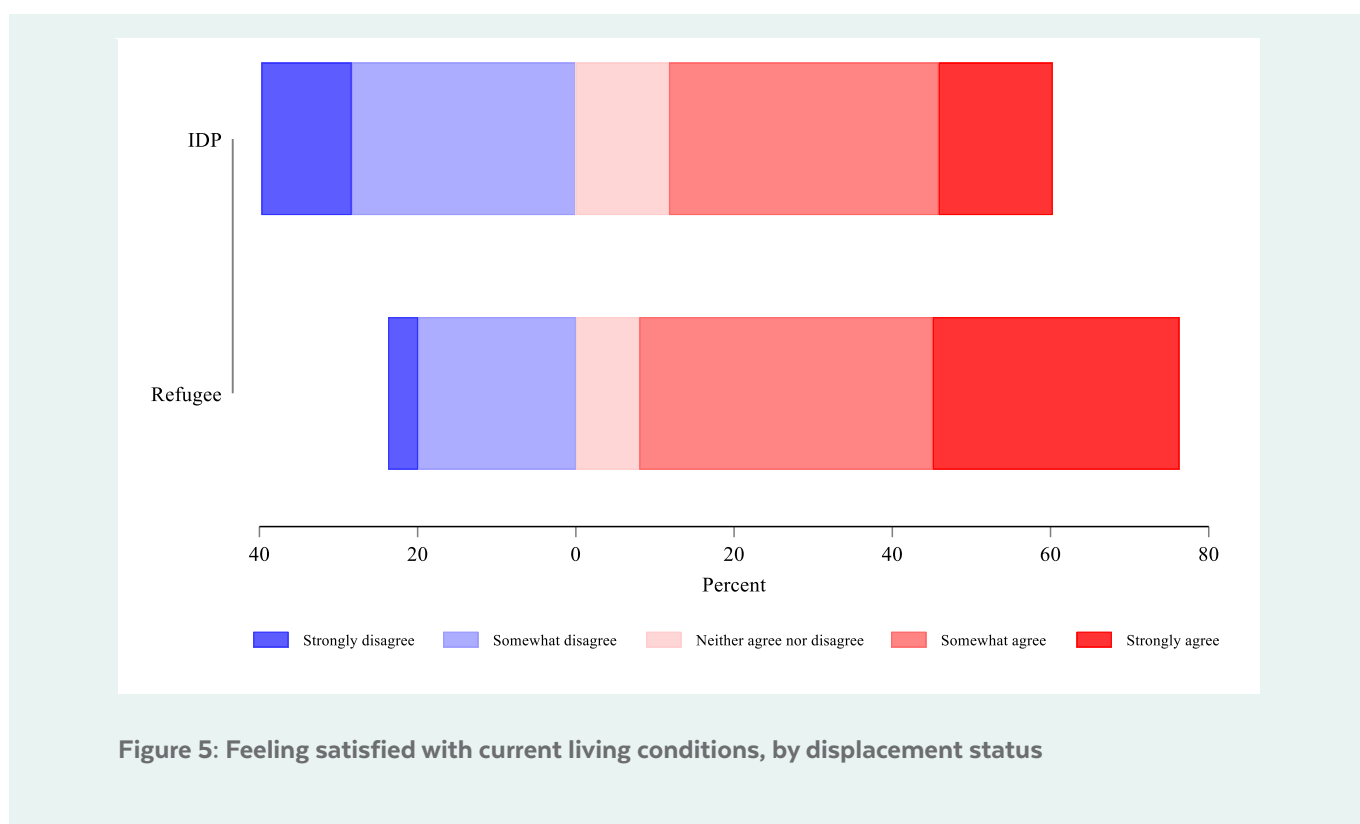


Figure 5: Feeling satisfied with current living conditions, by displacement status

Similarly, both refugees and IDPs generally report to have experienced little hostility in the hosting country/ new location in Ukraine (Fig.6).

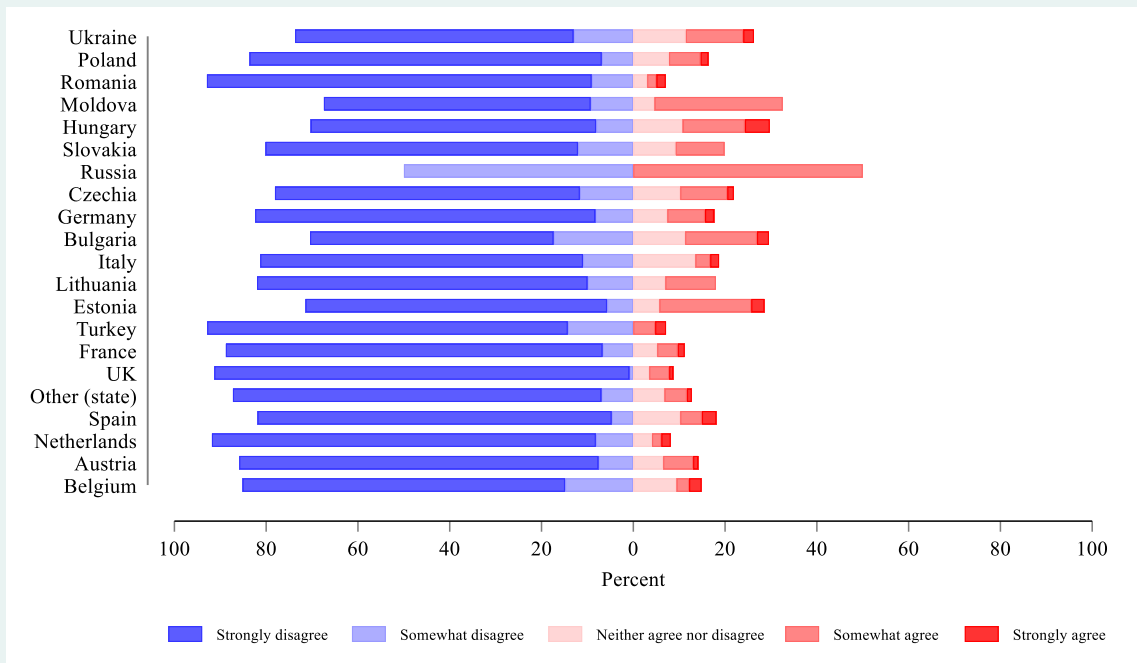


Figure 6: Experienced hostility in the new location, by country

PART V: Access to welfare and health support

Access to welfare support or housing and healthcare in receiving countries among refugees seems highest in Central and Eastern European countries and much less likely in Southern and Mediterranean ones. For example, among those who reached Germany, over 70% reported having received some kind of welfare support (Fig. 7).

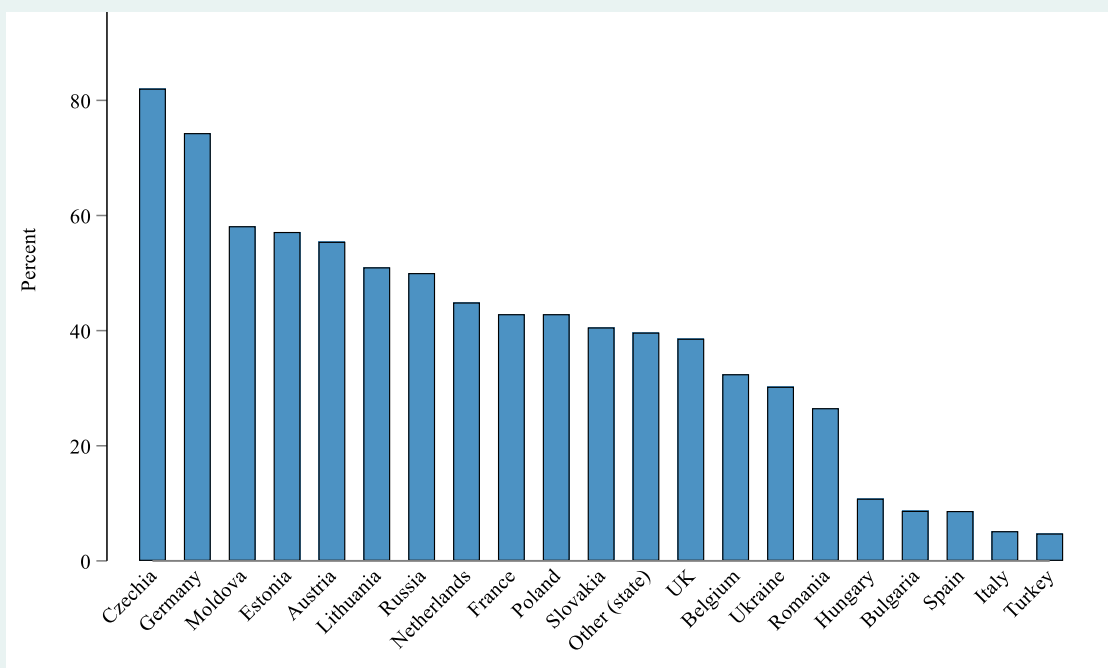


Figure 7: Percent receiving welfare payments, by country

PART VI: Health and wellbeing

Generally, displaced persons reported average or good levels of overall health, although over 20% of IDPs reported poor or very poor health conditions (Fig.8). IDPs also seemingly fare worse in all mental health-related question (Fig.9) and reported injuries due to blasts more frequently (2% vs. 0.8%). Note that IDPs are only slightly older than refugees (43.6 [95% C.I.: 43.26-44.13] vs. 42.6 [95% C.I.: 42.27-42.92] y/o).

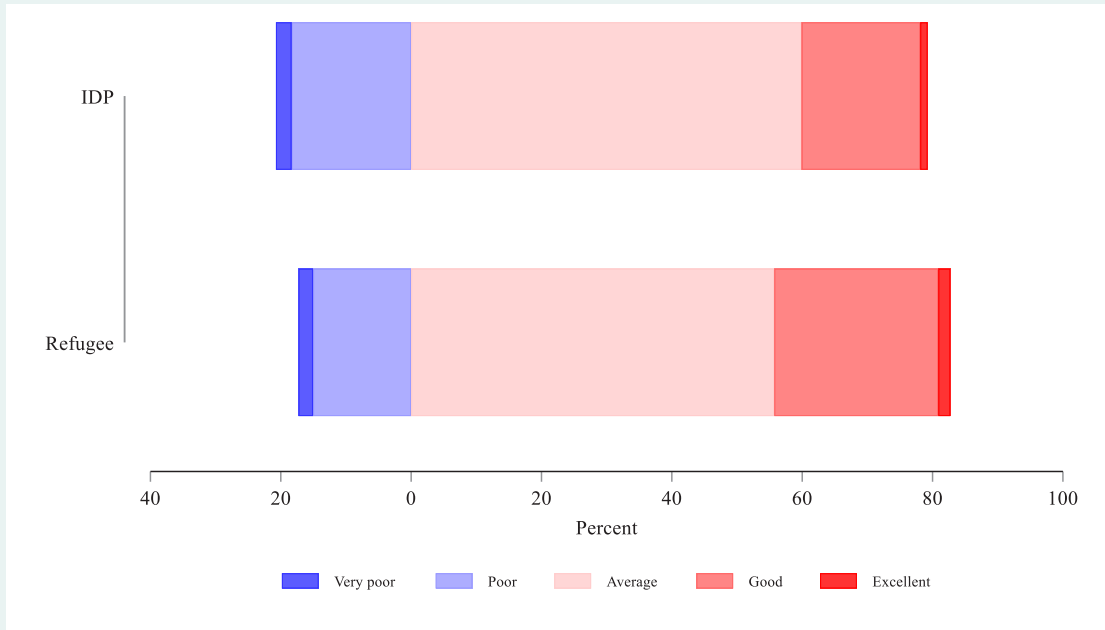


Figure 8: Self-rated health, by displacement status

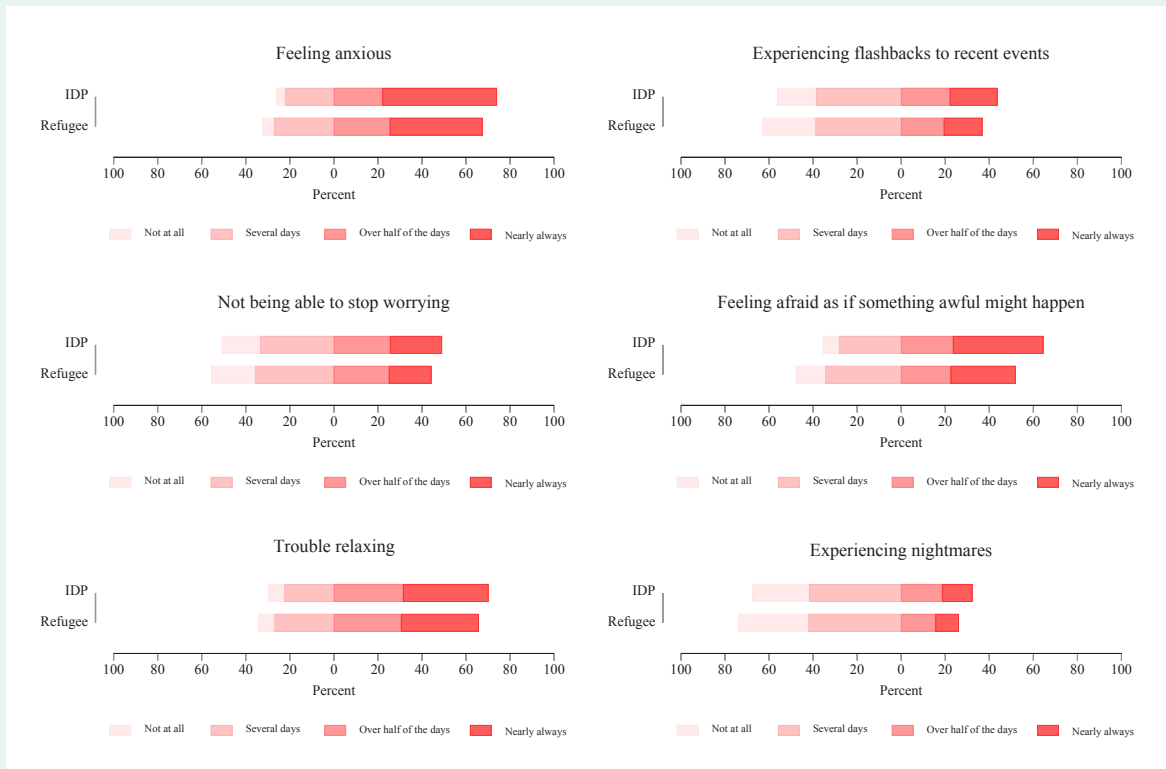


Figure 9: Mental health, by displacement status

PART VII: Returning to Ukraine or origin area within Ukraine

Most respondents, regardless of their displacement status, strongly agreed that they would be able to go back to Ukraine (refugees) or to their origin areas (IDPs) eventually. The least hopeful are refugees located in the Netherlands, Estonia, the UK and Germany (Fig. 10).

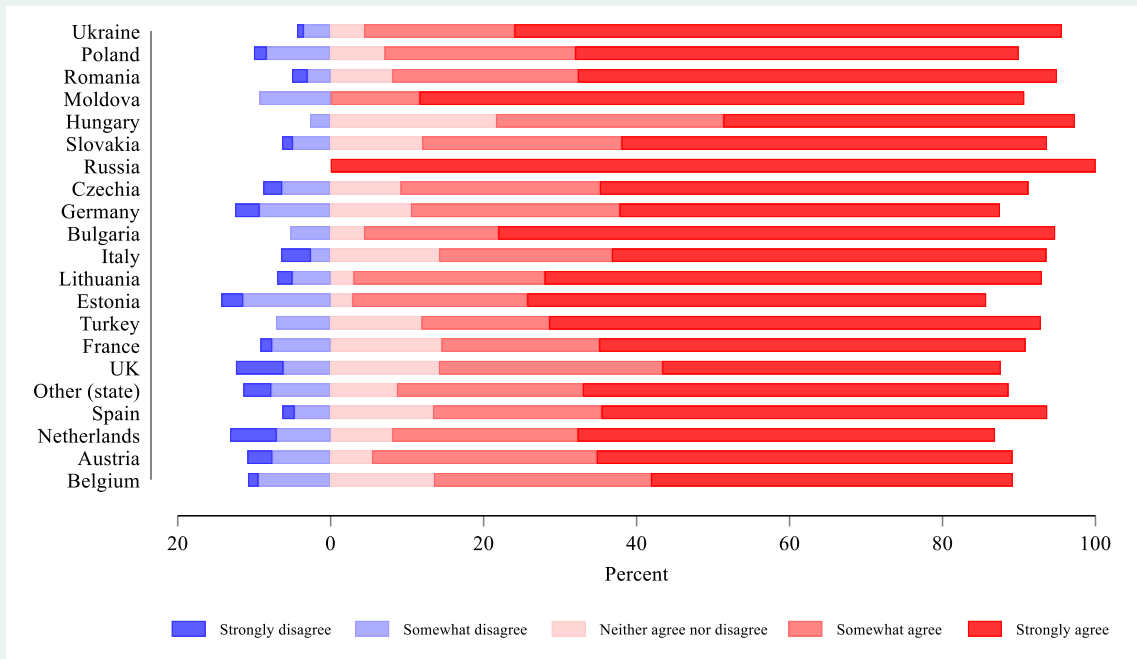


Figure 10: Believes will return to Ukraine/origin area, by country

Note: Only two respondents reported being in Russia.

Conclusion

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe since World War II. Using data from a large (yet non-representative) online survey, we provided some important snapshots on the living arrangements, experiences and health of individuals displaced within Ukraine and abroad.

Data showed that displaced persons – the majority being women – generally fled together with minors and/or adults aged 18+ for whom they have caring responsibilities. Although nearly all respondents reported having shelter, residing either with locals, persons they knew before the war, or in private rentals, it is likely that their current living arrangements are temporary. Larger families may also be at risk of overcrowding. Despite respondents’ shared belief of return to their homes in Ukraine and their overall satisfaction with their living conditions, as the conflict currently stands, it is likely that both IDPs and refugees will continue to face displacement for the foreseeable future. It is thus important to develop forward-looking strategies to help the displaced to find durable, appropriate, and affordable housing solutions. It is worth noticing here that, while providing housing support should ideally be easier to implement for refugees located in peaceful countries, our data suggest a great deal of country-level variation in the share of refugees who have received welfare or housing payments in the first months of relocation. In some European countries, especially Mediterranean ones, less than 10% of respondents received housing or welfare support, whereas 30% of IDPs displaced within Ukraine did.

While IDPs and refugees have generally fled with family members, they have also often left behind close relatives, partners and older relatives in particular. This not only implies that displaced persons will continue to have strong ties to Ukraine and to their local communities; as the war continues, separation from loved ones and worry for those left in danger will also likely take an increasingly significant toll on their mental health and wellbeing. Anxiety and feelings of worry and tension were highly prevalent in our sample. Since our survey underrepresents the most vulnerable, levels of distress and trauma are likely much more severe in the general population affected by the conflict.

As the war enters its fourth/fifth month, it is vital to continue to monitor the needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs and refugees in and outside Ukraine, and to expand efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable are not left behind.