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STRESS VULNERABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH IN EASTERN EUROPE IMMIGRANTS IN PORTUGAL

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Introduction: There are seldom mental health studies in Portugal about *immigrant populations*, particularly in groups belonging to *non-Portuguese speaking minorities*. The recent phenomenon of emergence of new migratory flows coming from Eastern Europe countries, which traditionally had no cultural or linguistic contact with the host country and the implications of this migratory process in the mental health *status* of this population, is the centre of this investigation.

Objectives: This study aims to perform a socio-demographic characterization, identify the main health problems and health surveillance patterns of the immigrant population from Eastern Europe countries in Portugal. It also aims to assess the stress vulnerability and the mental health *status* of this population.

Methods: The study was conducted in immigrant local centres from January 31st 2005 to March 31st 2006 and focused on 566 Eastern Europe immigrants residing in several regions of Portugal, 296 males and 270 females. We used the 23 QVS (Vaz Serra, 2000); GHQ-28 (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979); SSQ6 (Saranson, Saranson & Pierce, 1987) and a Socio-demographic questionnaire.

Results: From the 566 individuals in sample one; we conclude that this population is predominantly male, in active young age, with high academic qualifications.

Regarding mental health *status*, 10,4% of the inquired immigrants presented psychiatric pathology assessed by the cutting point of GHQ-28 and 54.9% presented *stress* vulnerability determined by the cutting point of 23QVS. We verified a statistically relevant correlation between stress vulnerability and the levels of mental health of the surveyed population.