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# Grandchildren of migrants more likely to get anxiety problems

By Jessica Hamzelou

MOVING to a new country is a stressful experience, putting migrants at increased risk of anxiety disorders. But they aren't the only ones who suffer: their children and grandchildren also experience more anxiety than the general population.

Baptiste Pignon at Public Assistance Hospitals of Paris and his colleagues combed through health surveys collected from nearly 39,000 people living in France. These included questions that screened for stress and anxiety disorders.

After accounting for sex, age, income and education levels, Pignon's team found that first, second and third-generation migrants were all more likely than non-migrants to experience anxiety disorders. Surprisingly, the grandchildren of migrants had the highest rate of such disorders, although it is unclear why.

Across the generations, migrants with anxiety disorders were also more likely to have a higher rate of suicide attempts compared with non-migrants with anxiety disorders (*Journal of Psychiatric Research*, [doi.org/cm2g](https://doi.org/cm2g)).

saute mouton  
au dessus  
d'une  
génération!!!

People who move from areas with poor living conditions to healthier environments tend to improve pretty quickly, says Barry Bogin at Loughborough University, UK. "But then research suggests that status deteriorates in the second generation as people face bias, discrimination and maybe language difficulties."

The psychological impact of migration might also be passed down through generations epigenetically, says Bogin. There is evidence that stress can trigger chemical changes that alter how genes make proteins, and that those changes can be passed to children and grandchildren.

It is difficult to know whether the findings apply to all migrants. Regardless, governments and schools need to do more health screening, says Bogin. "The need for action is vital."

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*anxiety”*

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