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Background: In addition to the developmental challenges typical of childhood and adolescence, migrant children and adolescents face additional challenges related to integration, adaptation, social exclusion, and socio-economic disadvantage. The present study aimed to understand and characterise, from an ecological perspective, the differences between national and migrant children and adolescents, focusing on personal, interpersonal, and contextual factors.

Methods: The study draws on data from the 2022 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) in Portuguese schools, conducted every four years in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), following an international protocol. A total of 7,643 students from the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th school grades responded: 53.9% were female, with an average age of 15.05 years (SD = 2.36). Twelve per cent of the respondents did not hold Portuguese nationality. The sample is representative of the school grades included in the study.

Results: The results enable comparison across four nationalities (Portuguese, Brazilian, African and Others (including adolescents from Russia, China, Eastern Europe, etc.)). We identified statistically significant differences between the four groups. Adolescents from African countries and Brazil face greater challenges, exhibit more risk behaviours, have fewer protective factors, and report more difficult relationships with key environments, such as the school, family and community, compared to their peers from Portugal and other countries.

Conclusions: The results have important implications for intervention strategies and evidence-based public policy aimed at promoting the well-being of migrant children and adolescents.

Speakers/Panellists:

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Understanding differences in well-being between national and migrant adolescents in Portugal

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