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REQUEST FOR ASYLUM AND CALLS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF A PSYCHIATRIC ILLNESS STATUS - WHAT ARE THE INTRICATIONS?

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Applicants for asylum travel through a migrant's journey, which is rewarding, but also psychologically difficult due to the trauma suffered in the country of origin, often as a result of political conflicts, war and diverse ethnic rifts, the separation from the native roots and the adaptation to a new socio-cultural context.

The migrant's insecurity of not quickly finding his bearings and stability in the host country could lead to transitional depressive symptoms, anxiety ruminations, nightmares and feelings of threat or rejection, which may be sometimes close to the experience of persecution.

These people have already been monitored by their general practitioner for several years.

During their journey, some are oriented towards psychiatric care. Usually their symptoms relate only to adaptation problems. Specific psychological support is offered when necessary.

However, it is ethically troublesome when these subjects appear at the psychiatric consultation with the request for the application of the various certificates for the recognition of a psychiatric disorder in order to support their request for asylum.

Such requests must be addressed impartially when they relate only to an adaptation problem where the migrant is susceptible, through termination, to resume the course of a citizen of the host country without necessarily attaining the status of a psychiatric patient.

The early psychiatrisation of migrants may discredit somewhat, through stigmatisation, their status as free subjects and not patients. We illustrate our ideas with some clinical observations.