

Beyond the Battlefield: The Impact of War on Expatriates' Health and Livelihoods

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NBER Summer Institute — Economics of Health, July, 2026

Introduction

- ▶ How do **migrants** cope with conflict in the origin country?
 - Rising number and severity of state-based conflicts (UCDP, 2024).
 - 300+ million international migrants (UNDESA, 2024).
- ▶ Refugees: Poor mental health (Fazel et al. 2005), labor-market consequences (Foged et al 2025).
- ▶ Less known about how war impacts the broader diaspora.
- ▶ Theory:
 - Mental health effect most likely negative.
 - Labor market effects ambiguous: **positive** if supporting family in origin country, or **negative** due to mental health shock.

This study

- ▶ Study **Russia's invasion of Ukraine** in February, 2022, and its effects on Ukrainians **living abroad**.
- ▶ Data: Swedish quarterly admin data on **mental health prescriptions** and **labor market** outcomes.
- ▶ Sample: Foreign-born living in Sweden 2019–2024. Exclude Russia and war-adjacent countries.
- ▶ Matched TWFE event-study:
 - ① Treated: Ukrainian-born.
 - ② Controls: for each Ukrainian, find two controls based on e.g. age, gender, years in Sweden, visa status, and earnings **before the war**.
 - ③ Sample size: 8,771 Ukrainians and 17,348 other migrants from ≈ 100 countries.

Increase in mental health prescriptions post-invasion

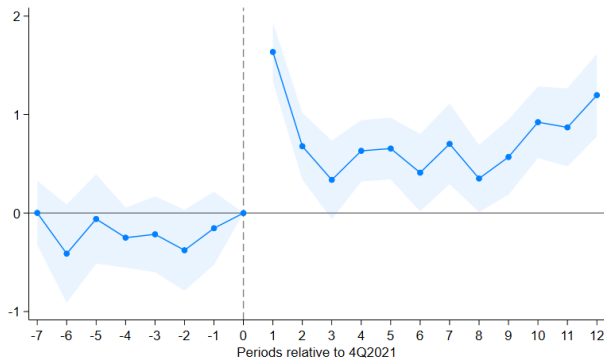
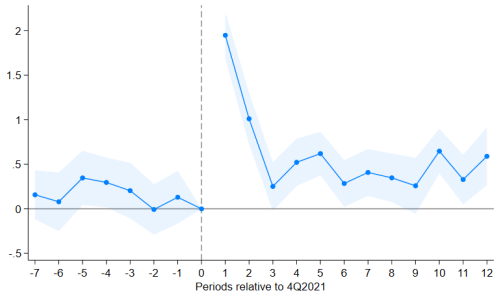


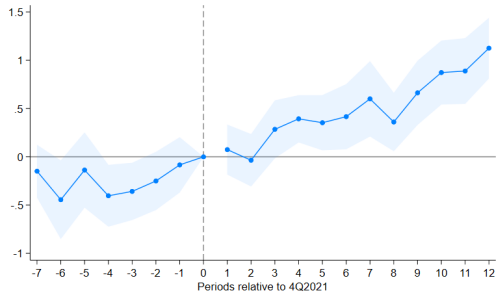
Figure: Any mental health prescription

- ▶ 30% increase in Q1 2022 (pre-invasion mean: 5.6%)
- ▶ 70% of the effect driven by first-time users

Shift to anti-depressants over time



(a) Immediate effect drugs (anti-anxiety/insomnia)



(b) Antidepressants

Earnings

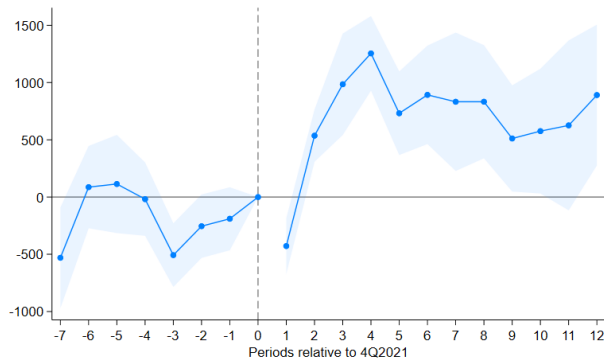
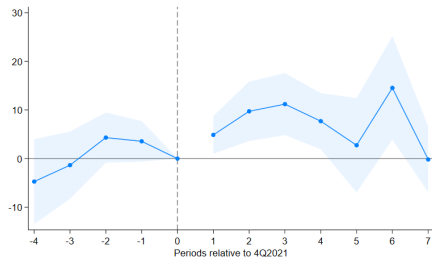


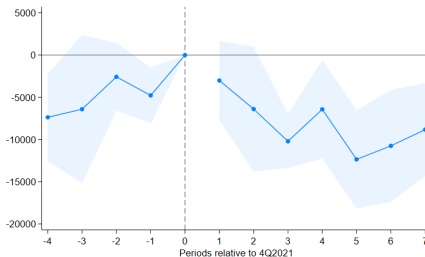
Figure: Monthly earnings (SEK)

- 3–4% increase in earnings

Reservation wages decrease



(a) Exit hazard



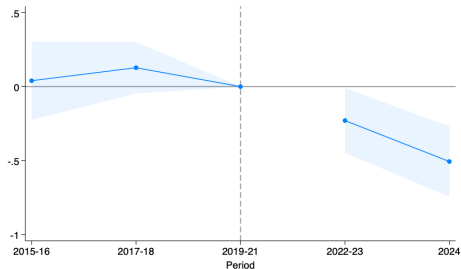
(b) Residual earnings (SEK)

Figure: Exit hazard and job quality outcomes among those unemployed between 3Q2020 and 4Q2021

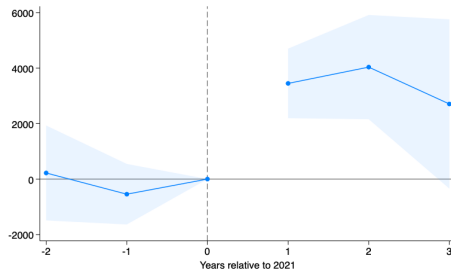
Effects on burnout

- ▶ Burnout: condition of extreme fatigue caused by work-related stress.
- ▶ 25% increase in specialist care for burnout among Ukrainians.
- ▶ Indication of possible long-term scarring effects.

External validity: Ukrainians in Europe and the US



(a) EU: Mental health index



(b) US: Monthly earnings, PPP SEK

- Repeated cross-section data ESS and ACS. Sample: Ukrainian-born aged 15-65 in 2021 living in Europe/US before the invasion.

Mechanisms: Conflict intensity

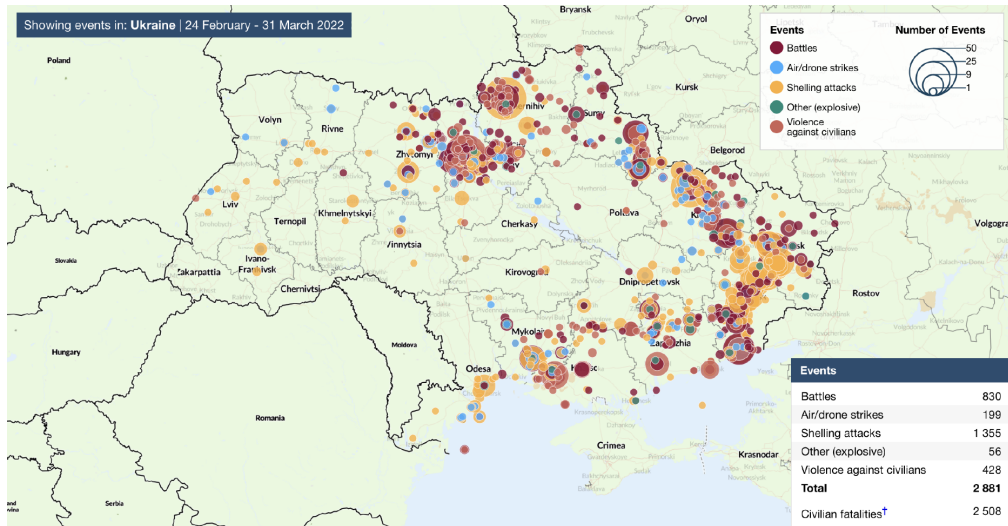
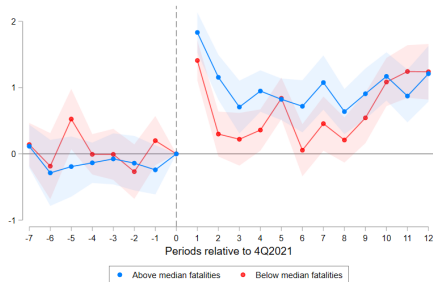
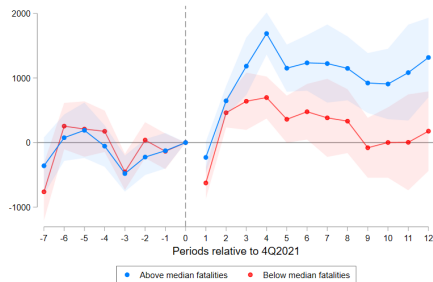


Figure: Conflict events in 2022 Q1 (ACLED)

Effects by fatalities in birth region



(a) Any mental health prescription



(b) Earnings

Refugee hosting in Sweden

	Any drug		Earnings	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ukraine × 2022	0.983*** (0.082)	0.996*** (0.085)	747.750*** (180.497)	753.795*** (180.278)
Ukraine × 2023	0.693*** (0.067)	0.710*** (0.063)	987.723*** (253.379)	996.192*** (258.701)
Ukraine × 2024	1.063*** (0.074)	1.064*** (0.084)	822.327*** (311.048)	835.542*** (315.494)
Ukraine × 2022 × Refugees	-0.260*** (0.050)		182.553* (100.452)	
Ukraine × 2023 × Refugees	-0.304** (0.134)		45.636 (127.357)	
Ukraine × 2024 × Refugees	-0.266** (0.125)		0.824 (173.971)	
Ukraine × 2022 × Assigned refugees		-0.273*** (0.080)		250.057** (118.542)
Ukraine × 2023 × Assigned refugees		-0.305** (0.144)		93.850 (125.217)
Ukraine × 2024 × Assigned refugees		-0.446*** (0.148)		70.113 (174.894)
Observations	520940	521900	520940	521900
Individuals (Ukraine)	8771	8771	8771	8771
Individuals (Control)	17348	17348	17348	17348
Mean (Ukraine)	5.60	5.60	26611.03	26611.03
Mean (Control)	5.95	5.95	25829.25	25829.25

Alternative mechanism

- ▶ Main alternative mechanism: war increases plans to stay in Sweden → invest in host-country integration.
- ▶ Not consistent with pattern of findings:
 - Quicker exit from unemployment with lower entry earnings
 - Working multiple jobs
 - Overqualified for jobs
- ▶ Effects very similar across Ukrainians expected to already have long-term plans to stay in Sweden before the war.

Conclusions

- ▶ Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine had immediate and long-term consequences for Ukrainian expatriates:
 - 30% increase in mental health prescriptions
 - 3-4% increase of earnings
- ▶ Likely underestimate the underlying mental health impact.
- ▶ Violent conflicts may have public health and labor market consequences in other countries.