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Rakshinda Kabir is a second year PhD student at the School of Politics and Social Sciences from Monash University. Her thesis is being completed under the guidance of Dr RoseAnne Misajon, Dr Ana-Maria Bliuc and Dr Richard Chambers. The research explores the impact of acculturative stress on coping strategies and quality of life. She is particularly interested in exploring whether mindfulness / meditation can be useful for developing resilience in terms of post-migration stress.

Experiences of Perceived Exclusion by Migrants and Refugees in Australia

Research shows that the many difficulties and challenges encountered by migrants and refugees in the post-migration context can become an impediment to successful resettlement efforts (Colic-Piesker & Tilbury 2003; Casimiro, Hancock & Northcote 2007). Recent research from the Scanlon Foundation's Mapping Social Cohesion series indicates that at the community level, neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status and high cultural diversity (where recent migrants are most likely to settle) are below the national average in terms of support for multiculturalism and social cohesion (The Australian Community, 2013). These findings are worrying as they suggest that economic and social disadvantage coupled with low levels of social cohesion affect prosperity, productivity and social harmony in the long term (The Australian Community, 2013). Accordingly, the current study seeks to understand how post-migration experiences of migrants and refugees (including perceptions of social cohesion) affect their wellbeing. A particular focus will be on the experiences of acculturative stress and the subsequent coping strategies which are employed. Initial interview data with 40 participants, from various ethnic backgrounds indicate that perceived subtle discrimination is a major acculturative stressor for migrants and refugees in Australia. The presentation will discuss the findings from in depth interviews with migrants concerning their experiences of stress and coping strategies in the post-migration context.

