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Impact of radiographic screening of >34 000 asylum seeker children

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Radiographic screening of more than 34 000 asylum seeker children in the Netherlands shows that, after introducing universal screening for latent TB infection, only children ≥ 12 years old from certain high-endemic countries require screening upon entry. <http://bit.ly/2yxLaZf>

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To the Editor:

Europe is facing a refugee crisis in which hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, often originating from tuberculosis (TB) high-endemic countries, risked their lives for a safer and better future in the European Union (EU) [1]. Among these asylum seekers, a considerable proportion were accompanied or unaccompanied minors [2, 3]. Screening practices for TB and latent TB infection (LTBI) among refugees are highly variable in the EU [4, 5]. Details of practices, including mandatory radiographic screening for intrathoracic TB among children of all ages, and aggregate yield of TB entry screening among asylum seekers in the Netherlands from 2012 to September 2015 have been described [1, 6]. Entry screening for LTBI was not routine. We present the results of radiographic TB screening among >34 000 asylum seeker children in the Netherlands in 2013–2017 (age groups suggested by the authors) and discuss options for policy changes.