

COMMON MENTAL DISORDERS AND USE OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE GENERAL POPULATION IN GREECE

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Introduction: General population surveys of the prevalence of common mental disorders are necessary for the organization of effective mental health services.

Objectives: Epidemiological studies are useful for the more objective assessment of the mental health needs of the population.

Aims: To present data on the pattern and correlates of 12-month use of services by persons with common mental disorders from the recently completed general population survey of psychiatric morbidity in Greece.

Methods: The sample ($n=4894$; multistage stratified random sample) was representative for the Greek population aged 18-70. Common mental disorders were assessed according to the ICD-10 criteria with the revised Clinical Interview Schedule (CIS-R), conducted by trained lay interviewers.

Results: 73.9% of participants with at least one common mental disorder (CMD) do not receive any treatment for their psychological health, 52% have never spoken to the family physician and 73.3% has not spoken to a mental health professional in the past year. The disorder associated with the most frequent use of general health services for any reason (>4 visits to any physician in the past year) was depression (43.7%). Overall, 46.5% of all participants who meet the criteria for a CMD had not spoken to a doctor or mental health professional, with men showing significantly higher rates of no use compared to women (54.6% vs 41.5%).

Conclusions: These findings can help in the better organization of services with the aim to improve prevention and treatment of common mental disorders in Greece, especially in a time of economic hardship.