
UNMET NEEDS IN PORTUGUESE ELDERLY PEOPLE: DATA FROM SERVICES RESEARCH AND THE 10/66 PREVALENCE SURVEYS ON DEMENTIA AND DEPRESSION

M. Gon^Áalves-Pereira¹, F. Barreiros¹, A. Cardoso¹, A. Verdelho², J. Alves da Silva¹, C. Raminhos¹, A. Fernandes³, M. Xavier¹

¹Dep. Mental Health, Faculdade de Ciências Médicas - Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal ; ²Department of Neurosciences (Neurology), Hospital de Santa Maria/CHLN-University of Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal ; ³USF Fernão Ferro mais, CSSeixal, Lisbon, Portugal

Introduction

The healthcare needs of the elderly are seldom assessed in practice. Research in clinical populations with neuropsychiatric disorders generally unravels high levels of unmet needs. Although there are Portuguese studies in needs assessment, explorations of community or social services' scenarios have been scarce.

Objectives and aims

By gathering data from health and social services research, and from an epidemiological survey in the same region, we aimed to better characterize the unmet needs of Portuguese elderly.

Methods

We report on studies with old age people in Seixal, near Lisbon: 1) the Camberwell Assessment of Need for the Elderly was used for auditing a non-profit organization, with day-centre and home support services (n=95), and in a survey of family carers of dementia outpatients (n=116); 2) the 10/66 DRG community prevalence study (n=670) used comprehensive assessments to provide psychiatric diagnoses, data on health and psychosocial needs, and the use of services.

Results

In the social service audit, unmet needs were mainly related to food, company, physical health and daytime activities. Domiciliary care users had more unmet needs than day centre users (p<0.001). Informal caregivers of dementia patients reported information and psychological distress needs. Finally, these 10/66 DRG study partial results highlighted a high prevalence of depression (20.4%; 95%CI 17.4-23.7) and huge health services' utilization needs.

Conclusions

Systematic assessments of needs for care generally unravel high proportions of health and psychosocial problems lacking adequate interventions, in clinical and community populations. This may provide a more consistent basis for health services planning.