

The Impact of the Economic Crisis in Mental Health: Redefining the Priorities of Mental Health Policies and Plans

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1. Introduction

The financial crisis we are currently facing in Portugal brought additional challenges for the implementation of the national mental health strategy.

Those challenges include an increased pressure in the mental health services management that is accompanied by an increased demand by populations. The current constraints also call for the reworking of some aspects of the strategy, highlighting some of its goals.

2. Objectives

1. To update the National Mental Health Strategy 2007-2016 considering the challenges emerged from the European economical crisis and subsequent budgetary constrains. 2. Define high priorities to proceed with the plan implementation.

3. Methods

A multidimensional evaluation was conducted by the National Mental Health Programme and included the following dimensions: structure of care and activity of public mental health services, SWOT analysis and WHO evaluation committee report.

4. Results

Several high priorities were defined for the update, including the following: 1. Create a new financing and management model, 2. Resume the deinstitutionalisation process, 3. Proceed with the implementation of the long-term integrated mental health care, 4. Launch the project for the monitoring of human rights and promotion of care quality, to be developed in cooperation with the WHO.

5. Conclusion

Whilst the economic crises poses many challenges regarding the implementation of health policies and plans, the impact and the burden associated with mental disorders demands for a continuity in the improvement of all dimensions of care through coordinated plans.