

PATHWAYS TO CARE IN PSYCHIATRY, THE EXAMPLE OF THE CARPI'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

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Introduction: Studying the pathways followed by psychiatric patients is important to plan both mental health services organization and training programmes for doctors and psychiatrists.

Objective: Detecting the main pathways-to-care followed by patients.

Aim: Finding the reasons why patients look for psychiatric help and the main responses given to patients' problems by psychiatric services. Evaluating the delays occurring along the pathways.

Methods: The study has been done on 420 Italian patients. In one month, patients with a new episode of disease have been included. Each of them has been administered a questionnaire collecting socio-demographical, medical infos and data concerning health workers, timing and delays along the pathways. Diagnosis done using ICD-10 and an Intervention Detection Schedule filled for each patient.

Results: The Carpi's sample consists of 43 patients. The 58% has seen the General Practitioner (GP) in the first place, the 19% the hospital doctor (HD), the 16% the psychiatric worker. Nation-widely, most patients have firstly referred to the psychiatrist (34%). In Carpi, the 44% has received a diagnosis of "Neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders". The 93% has been treated with psychotropic medications. The longest pathway has occurred for behavioural syndromes associated with physiological disturbances and physical factors, the shortest for affective disorders.

Conclusions: GP, HD and direct access are the 3 main pathways followed by patients. The importance of the GP is confirmed, so as the necessity for training of sanitary workers within the psychiatric field. A greater cooperation between general practice and mental health services should be pursued.