
UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CARE AMONG PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION IN LATVIA

J. Vrublevska¹, E. Rancans¹, S. Snikere², M. Trapencieris²

¹Department of Psychiatry and Narcology, Riga Stradins University, Riga, Latvia ; ²Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

Background. Depression is highly prevalent and disabling mental disorder, less than one third of all cases receive any treatment, suggesting a remarkable level on unmet needs.

Aim. The aim of the study was to assess differences in health care utilization among people with depression and those with no symptoms in representative sample of the general Latvian population.

Methods. The study was a part of the FINBALT health monitoring survey in 2012, a collaborative project between Baltic States and Finland, which monitors health related behaviours; the questionnaire included depression module of the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI). A total of 3003 15-64 years old persons were interviewed by using face-to-face computerized data collection tool.

Results. The 12-month prevalence of depression in the general population of Latvia was 7.3% (95% CI 6.4–8.3). Use of any health care service over last 12 months was higher among those with depression compared with those without symptoms (84.8% and 73.1%); these differences remained significant after adjusting for age and gender (OR=2.0; 95% CI 1.4–3.0; $p<0.001$). Primary care services were used 4.3 times (SD 3.0) during the last 12 months among those with depression as compared with 3.2 (SD 3.9) times among those with no depression ($t=4.50$; $p<0.001$); while specialist services were used 3.1 times (SD 2.5) and 2.4 times (SD 1.8) ($t=-3.973$, $p<0.001$), respectively.

Conclusions. Health care services are more frequently sought-after by people with depression, and taking into account underdiagnosis of depression in Latvia, more efficient screening and management tools are needed.