

Article: 0621

Topic: EPW03 - e-Poster Walk Session 03: Cultural Psychiatry, Promotion of Mental Health, Migration and Mental Health of Immigrants, Prevention and Mental Disorders

Perceptions of Roma People Towards Public Health System and a Classification into Homogeneous Groups Using K-means Cluster Analysis

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Background: The our knowledge about the attitudes of the Roma towards health system has not been fully investigated.

Objectives: To present the perceptions, the feelings and the beliefs of Roma people towards public health system.

Aims: To investigate the attitudes of the Roma towards public health system

Methods: Participants were 361 Romani, living in the central Greece area. The Others as Shamer Scale, Experience of Shame Scale, State/Trait Anxiety Inventory, Family Environment Scale and Symptom Check List were administered to collect the data along with a detailed questionnaire which recorded the social and economic factors that may affect the psychological characteristics studied. Perceptions and beliefs of Roma people towards public health facilities were recorded using the PBQ questionnaire that was designed and administered for first time in this study.

Results: Feelings of abandonment and social discrimination corresponded to higher scores of shame. The inability to understand medical instructions, the feeling of being different and the need to be surrounded by relatives while in the hospital are correlated with psychopathology and shame indexes whereas strong family structure corresponds to improved perception towards public health system. As an attempt to classify the respondents in homogeneous groups towards their responses in PBQ questionnaire we applied cluster analysis and a three group solution is proposed. Lack of education and harder living condition characterize the cluster with the most negative feelings towards public health system.

Conclusions: The results of this paper may be useful in policy makers and persons looking to create interventions in this minority.