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Introduction

General population surveys of the prevalence and associations of common mental disorders are necessary for the organization of effective mental health services.

Aims

To present data on the pattern and correlates of 12-month use of services by persons with common mental disorders from the recently completed general population survey of psychiatric morbidity in Greece.

Methods

The sample ($n=4894$; multistage random sample drawn from population of both mainland and insular Greece) can be regarded as representative of the Greek population aged 18-70. Participants were interviewed at their households by trained lay interviewers. Common mental disorders were assessed according to the ICD-10 criteria with the revised Clinical Interview Schedule (CIS-R), a fully structured diagnostic interview.

Results

73.9% of participants with at least one common mental disorder (CMD) do not receive any treatment for their psychological health, 52% have never spoken to the family physician and 73.3% has not spoken to a mental health professional in the past year. The disorder associated with the most frequent use of general health services for any reason (>4 visits to any physician in the past year) was depression (43.7%). Regarding use of family physician services for a mental health issue, patients with panic disorder (54.4%) and generalized anxiety disorder (52.8%) were more likely to consult compared to other CMDs. The overall percentage of patients with CMDs that choose to talk to a priest or other spiritual for their mental health problem was comparable to that who talked to a mental health professional. Overall, 46.5% of all participants who meet the criteria for a common mental disorder had not spoken to a doctor or mental health professional, with men showing significantly higher rates of no use compared to women (54.6% men vs. 41.5% women).

Conclusions

The findings of the present study can help in the better organization of services with the aim to improve prevention and treatment of common mental disorders in Greece especially in a time of economic hardship.