

THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED INSECURITY ON PATIENTS' WELL-BEING: A STUDY IN 24 MENTAL HEALTH CENTRES

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Introduction: The recent global crisis as well as the increasing crimes' rates have been claimed to be a factor of mental distress and disturbance.

Objectives: To describe the levels of insecurity and the fear of crime in a sample of patients with mental disorders with a sample of mental health professionals.

Methods: The study has been carried out in 24 Italian mental health centres. In each centre 20 patients and 20 mental health professionals have been recruited. Clinical status and social functioning have been evaluated with the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF), the Hamilton Anxiety scale (HAM-A) and the Hamilton Depression scale (HAM-D). Fear of crime and insecurity have been assessed by Perceived Insecurity Questionnaire (PIQ).

Results: The final sample consists of 426 patients. They are mostly female (70%), employed and married, with a diagnosis of mood disorder (52%). High levels of worries/insecurity at the PIQ are reported by 42% of patients. Perceived insecurity is associated with higher levels of HAM-A and HAM-D. Nearly all respondents report to have worries or fears about the future (93%), in particular as regards bereavement or loss (41%), economic difficulties (28%), mental or physical illness (26%). In multiple regression model, worries about the economic situation are more frequent in person who are male, young, married and with more than two children.

Conclusions: The results suggest an association between perceived insecurity with anxiety and depression. Further studies are needed to better understand this association and to develop educational programs on stress and mental disorders.