PORTUGUESE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND WORKFORCE PROFILES

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1. Introduction

The scarcity of human resources is a factor that hampered the improvement of mental health (MH) services in Portugal. MH teams continue to rely on a small number of psychologists, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and other non-medical professionals, with most teams maintaining traditional models care delivery. Nevertheless teams continue to evolve to ameliorate MH care considering present patients needs and effective treatments.

2. Objectives

This study aims to describe services and workforce profiles in Portuguese MH services.

3. Methods

The study was carried out at public and private MH services in mainland Portugal. Profiles were assessed by survey method related with two dimensions: 1 - services characteristics and 2 - workforce profile.

4. Results

Assessment of services showed: liaison with primary health care (56%), routine use of guidelines (57%), use of individual care plans (46%), in-service research (25%). Regarding workforce, 19% of the teams still rely on 2 professional groups (Psychiatrist and Nurse), 88% do regular training, 60% reported use of case management models, but only 16% had formal training on the model.

5. Conclusion

Despite the incremental inclusion of MH care essential components associated with services modernisation, Portuguese mental health teams still struggle to provide integrated care with the contribution of multiple professional groups in a multidisciplinary framework. This is specially true in the interior and rural areas of the country. Training programmes need to be maintained as a special priority by national and regional authorities to assure effective delivery of care.