

AS10-04 - CROSS-CULTURAL TELEPSYCHIATRY AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY OF CARE

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Access to adequate mental health care services is one of the identified problems within EU mental health services. Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants experience major difficulties due to language and cultural barriers. The treatment of such patients is costly due to use of interpreters with consequent longer treatment time, less efficacy and decreased patient and provider satisfaction. A telepsychiatry project was conducted to improve access to culturally-appropriate care providers (i.e. culturally competent, bilingual clinicians) by the use of videoconferencing. A self-completed retrospective questionnaire survey was conducted with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The service was free of charge for the patients involved. Over a period of 34 months, 61 patients participated in the pilot project. The patients' residency status was: refugees (n = 45), asylum seekers (n = 12), migrants (n = 3) and domestic (n = 1). A total of 318 telepsychiatry sessions (lasting 35-45 min) was conducted, with an average of 5.2 sessions per patient. Nine languages were spoken during the study period (Danish, Arabic, Farsi, Somali, Kurdish, Polish, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian). 52 patients completed the questionnaire. Patients reported high level of satisfaction and willingness to use telepsychiatry again and recommend it to others. They preferred telepsychiatry via their mothertongue, rather than interpreter-assisted care. Technology has a vital role to play in enhancing accessibility to and efficacy of psychiatric services in provision of high qualified mental health care.