

P01-191 - SPECIAL NEEDS OF TRAVELLER CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN IRELAND

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Introduction: Travellers have historically suffered from discrimination in Ireland and their children have been marginalised as a result.

Objectives: Review relevant online and hardcopy literature pertaining to special needs of Traveller Children and Adolescents

Aims:

1/ Assess/evaluate impact of socio-cultural context and environment upon treatment for psychiatric problems of Traveller children/adolescents in Ireland.

2/ Assess/evaluate coverage of mainstream knowledge and understanding of Traveller family and community culture; categorisation of traveller children/adolescents affected by cultural/social misunderstandings; communication issues due to cultural differences with settled community; impact of sense of exclusion and/or discrimination upon traveller children/adolescents; role of 'racism' in tendency to believe traveller children/adolescents have mental problems more quickly than those from settled community; apprehension of involvement in treatment process; different expectations of traveller families from mainstream specialists with respect to treatment process and objectives.

Methods: Rigorous review of relevant and applicable hardcopy/internet literature in English since 2000 with particular emphasis on traveller children/adolescents in Ireland.

Results: Problems associated with traveller children/adolescents generally multi-dimensional and require additional assistance through family and community oriented mental health services that respect and understand cultural values and way of life of the traveller population. Furthermore, awareness of discrimination and exclusion that has been and is suffered by the travelling population is essential in responding to psychiatric needs of traveller children/adolescents.

Conclusion: History of discrimination and exclusion together with lack of cultural understanding and empathy have often hampered effective treatment of traveller children/adolescents in Ireland. Need for greater involvement of travelling communities in psychiatric treatment process.