
IMPROVING SOMATIC HEALTH OF OUTPATIENTS WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS

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Introduction Patients with severe mental illness (SMI) experience a 13- to 30-year reduction in life-expectancy. The majority of these deaths can be attributed to somatic health problems. The risk on somatic health problems is partly increased due to a reduced ability to request care and a health care organisation that is unable to fulfil the needs of these patients. Our previous work shows that a health-check-intervention can bypass the inability to request help of patients with SMI by detecting somatic healthproblems that were not detected previously[1].

Objectives

To develop policy-recommendations to improve the health care organisation for the physical health of outpatients with SMI.

Aims

We aim to present a selection of policy-recommendations based on consensus between patients, family carers, general practitioners(GP) and mental health care staff

Methods

We used a three-round Delphi method. The first round consisted of an inventory of potential policy-recommendations, in the two consecutive rounds consensus was sought on a selection of recommendations.

Results

The policy recommendations described improvement in collaboration among health care professionals; the need to educate involved professionals regarding the specific medical risks associated with patients with SMI; and defining the differences between GPs and mental health care professionals regarding their responsibilities to provide adequate care for the physical health of SMI patients.

Conclusions

Currently there are multiple barriers to optimal health care which can be overcome by implementing the suggested policy recommendations.

[1] F.M. van Hasselt, et al. Gaps in health care for the somatic health of outpatients with SMI *Int.J.Ment.HealthNursing* 2013Jun;22(3):249-55