

Minority Voices - Mental Health Representations in Roma Portuguese Communities

A. Monteiro¹, C. Abreu¹, R. Pereira¹, C. Antunes¹, A. Francisco¹

¹Health Sciences Research Unit: Nursing-ESEnfC, Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

- **Introduction**

Systemized research on the social representations of mental health in minority groups is scarce and it is even scarcer with Roma communities.

- **Aim**

This paper describes a research conducted from the perspective of social representations theory exploring the understanding of mental ill-health amongst Roma communities residing in the center region of Portugal (Coimbra).

- **Methods**

A qualitative ethnographic study was conducted. Data from observations, interviews with key informants, field notes and Focus groups were analyzed

Results - Findings suggest that the culturally-based conceptions of mental health and emotional well-being in these Roma participants have a holistic approach, without a clear separation between the concept of '*physical health*' and '*mental health*'.

In this study, the notion of mental health and emotional well-being was strongly associated with the family's well-being, including the extended family, and not only with the individual well-being

Conclusions - Mental health promoting programs in Roma communities should integrate families in structural interventions and, an ecological approach.

Keywords –Minority ethnic groups; Roma communities, Social representations