

## PORTUGUESE MENTAL HEALTH PLAN: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

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**Introduction:** Following the principles and recommendations of international institutions and documents (e.g., WHO, European Union, WHO 2001 Global Mental Health Report and the Helsinki European Declaration), the Portuguese Government launched a new Mental Health Plan (MHP), to be implemented from 2007 to 2016.

**Objective:**

- a) To evaluate the current situation of mental health facilities in Portugal,
- b) assess the feasibility of national training programmes and
- c) to ascertain the key obstacles of the execution of the Mental Health Plan.

**Method:** Level of achievements was appraised by i. A full assessment piloted by the Portuguese National Coordination for Mental Health and ii. a cross-sectional evaluation conducted by a task force from WHO-European Regional Office.

**Results:** So far the MHP has been moderately executed. Relevant accomplishments include: closing of psychiatric hospitals (40% of chronic patients deinstitutionalized), creation of 20 mental health services for adults, children and adolescents, training of 650 professionals, sponsoring of 46 community mental health projects, launching the residential and supported care network with the Health and Social Affairs Ministries.

**Conclusions:** Significant challenges persisting are:

- a) To increase provision of crisis services and residential places,
- b) To strength the role of primary care services regarding common mental disorders,
- c) To reinforce the role of non-medical professionals in MHS and
- d) To change the financing system that has disincentives to establish community based services.