

MENTAL HEALTH ECONOMICS EUROPEAN NETWORK PHASE II: EXPANSION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

PSSRU

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BACKGROUND

The Mental Health Economics European Network (MHEEN I) was established in 2002 with 17 partners (the then 15 EU member states plus Norway and Iceland). In 2004 (MHEEN II) the network was extended from the original 17 countries and expanded to include new member and candidate states and includes 31 countries. The project is coordinated by Mental Health Europe and the London School of Economics and is funded by the European Commission for 24 months (July 2004 – September 2007). MHEEN I constructed a simple framework to identify and collect data on some of the primary economic dimensions relevant to mental health, and undertook a comparative analysis of how current mental health systems work and how they might be developed. MHEEN II extended the initial analysis to the new member and candidate states using this same framework. It also extended the work of MHEEN I by analysing the impact of modifying economic barriers and incentive structures for the organisation of mental health services, economic data collection methods at a micro level, and reviewing the cost effectiveness of promotion and prevention strategies against a range of mental health problems occurring across the lifecycle including depression and anxiety disorders.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of MHEEN II are:

- To contribute to the promotion and protection of public health in Europe by gathering and analyzing information and knowledge in respect of the economics and financing of mental health
- To build on the work of the existing Network (MHEEN I) and produce high quality mental health economics related research to inform the policy process across Europe
- To add value to the Network through links with other expert groups such as the International Mental Health Promotion Action network, and the European Workplace Health Promotion Network.
- To assess the cost-effectiveness of mental health promotion and prevention strategies against a range of mental health problems including depression and anxiety disorders
- To construct and apply a tool for assessing mental health service utilisation and costs at the local level
- To develop a sustainable network of mental health economics expertise through capacity building and networking to aid decision making at the European, national and local level.

METHODS

As part of its initial phase of work, MHEEN has developed a framework and a set of tools for the collection of mental health economics data across Europe. Questionnaires completed by partners have provided information on:

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- Mental health care financing
- Mental health expenditure levels and patterns
- Estimation of unit costs of mental health related services
- Provision: services and professionals
- Employment (of people with or at risk of mental health problems)
- Use of economic evaluation and role in policy making
- Issues in resource allocation.

These tools, subject to some adaptation, to take into account specific issues and different organisational structures relevant to new network members, will be used to collate and generate information on mental health economics data across Europe. The multi disciplinary background of network members together with inputs with other networks linked to MHEEN are a key aspect of this work. New instruments will again be developed or adapted iteratively, drawing on the network's considerable expertise and experience. Systematic literature reviews will be used augmented further by data supplied by network members.

OUTPUTS

1. Published outputs: short policy notes, technical and academic reports relating to information on the economics of mental health in Europe
2. Tools: construct and test tools for:
 - Assessing and economically analysing mental health service utilisation at the local level
 - Collecting primary mental health economics data thus facilitating meaningful cross-national comparisons
 - Sustainable capacity building: host seminars/workshops on mental health economic issues and exchange knowledge formally and informally within and beyond the Network
 - Electronic outputs: to further develop a website as a portal for communication, information resources and databases
 - Information resource: act as an information resource, supporting policy makers, service users and other stakeholders
 - Awareness and engagement: to increase understanding of the role of mental health economics as a tool to support policy-making, by engaging actively with policy-makers.

RESEARCH TEAM

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