Author's response to reviews

Title: Differing mental health practice among general practitioners, private psychiatrists and public psychiatrists

Authors:

Nadia Younes (nadiayounes@wanadoo.fr)
Marie-Christine Hardy-Bayle (MCHardyBayle@ch-versailles.fr)
Bruno Falissard (falissard_b@wanadoo.fr)
Viviane Kovess (vkovess@mgen.fr)
Marie-Pierre Chaillet (MCHAILLET@ch-versailles.fr)
Isabelle Gasquet (isabelle.gasquet@sap.aphp.fr)

Version: 2 Date: 30 May 2005

Author's response to reviews:

Re: 2020873187003860
Differing mental health practice among general practitioners, private psychiatrists and public psychiatrists.
BMC Public Health
Dear Assistant Editor of BMC Public Health,
Thank you for your questions about our manuscript.

Question 1 (Please explain why you decided to conduct this cross-sectional/prevalence study).

We have decided to conduct this cross-sectional/prevalence study in a pilot area on all local physicians involved in mental health care (general practitioners, private psychiatrists and public psychiatrists) to gain a better understanding of the overall mental health care organization. It aimed at studying mental health patient distribution, mental health practice and the opinions and job satisfaction of all physicians about it. The final aim was to adapt a new mental health program to these particular attitudes.

Question 2 (Please describe whether the conclusions from your study can be applied beyond their current setting (please also confirm that this is described in the manuscript)).

The conclusions from our study can be applied beyond their current setting since they give information about the mental health care organization among general practitioners, private psychiatrists and public psychiatrists in an European country where patients may decide for themselves what kind of care to look for and where they have direct access to specialists. This system (as observed in Belgium, Germany, Switzerland) differs with the gate-keeper system in UK, the Netherlands and Spain [1]. We have introduced a little complement in the discussion of the manuscript in order to describe the conclusion application as required (we have made an another submission).

Question 3 (Please describe how the conclusions from your study will be used by yourself, or by other researchers/practitioners in the field).

The study gave interesting results about opinions of exhaustively all physicians involved in mental health care in an area at the same time. Private psychiatrists up till now have been particularly very rarely explored. We observed that GPs had to cater for patients with severe mental health problems, that patients of primary care and private psychiatric settings were in fact more similar than different on demographics, diagnosis and severity criteria, but that care provided varied. Mental health practice seemed a burden to all professionals. GPs expressed particular dissatisfaction with their relationships with psychiatrists. It may be that psychiatrists, overworked and working in isolation, cannot find time or scope for more collaboration with GPs unless there is a whole reorganization of the mental health system. Professionals sought for independence and collaboration. Results confirmed the need to implement more collaborative practices between practitioners involved in mental health, not in the form of the classic referral to specialists as the major therapeutic option, but in the form of emphasis on collaborative relationships with mental health specialists. Results have been integrated into the "South Yvelines Mental Health Network" created in June 2001, by promoting this type of collaborative relationships in the area. Such conclusions are coherent with organizational interventions worldwide conducted to improve the management of common mental disorders in primary care[2, 3]. The study may contribute to direct those interventions from physician opinions.