

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

SCREENING FOR DEPRESSION AT PRIMARY HEALTH CARE LEVEL IN 2023

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Background: Mental health is important part of overall health, and Republic of Serbia, adopted the Mental Health Protection Program (MHPP) for the period 2019-2026. Health system has a great part of MHPP implementation through prevention of mental disorders and improvement of mental health.. Screening for depression in adult population is introduced at primary health care level (PHCC) and is performed by general practitioners (GPs). Aim of this article is to investigate and compare coverage of adult population in different administrative regions of Serbia by screening for depression, performed in PHC in 2023.

Methods: We collected reports from regional network of Institutes of public health, about performance of GPs, including screening for depression in PHC. Also, we used data obtained from HIF, as reports of GP services for screening for depression performed in 2023, through invoiced realization of health services of all primary health care centers in Serbia.

Results: According to data obtained from 25 administrative regions in Serbia, coverage of adult population (19+), by screening for depression, varies from region to region, but didn't reach 8% in any of them, as it was planned. The highest coverage was in Nišavski region 7.5% and Južnobački region 7.1%, and the lowest coverage, below 1% was in Severnobački region (0.61%). In five regions, coverage was in interval from 5.0% to 6.7% (Pirotski, Zlatiborski, Sremski, Severnobački, Šumadijski), in nine regions coverage was in interval from 3.5% to 4.8% (Kolubarski, Moravički, Zapadnobački, Pomoravski, Južnobački, Braničevski, Mačvanski, Rasinski, Zaječarski), and in eight regions including Belgrade city, coverage was in interval from 1.2% to 2.6% (Toplički, Borski, Srednjobanatski, Pčinjski, Raški, Podunavski and Jablanički).

Conclusions: There is a need for improvement of skills and knowledge of GPs, in the area of mental health, as well as creating conditions for increasing of coverage of adult population by screening for depression.

Keywords: Screening for depression, Basic health care services, Primary health care, Health care regulations, Health needs