

BARRIERS TO HEALTH CARE AND THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA:
HOW CAN THE ACCESS AND THE RIGHT TO HEALTH BE IMPROVED

Abstract:

Little is known about the help-seeking behaviour and barriers to care among people with mental illness in poor resource settings in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study has investigated prevalence's of mental illness, peoples help-seeking behavior and their perceived barriers to mental health care in one of South Africa's nine provinces, the Eastern Cape. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 12 framework was used analyse the health system and right to health aspects. The project used qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. A total of 977 men and women aged 18-40 years old was included in the cross sectional study and 37 health staff was interviewed with qualitative methods. The study was done during 2011 and 2012.

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Short bio:

Lena Andersson is Associate professor, BSW, MSW is international coordinator for the Department of social work, programme coordinator for the International Master programmes Social Work and Human Rights and course leader for the course Health promotion and Prevention at the Master of Global Health. She received her PhD 2006 at the Unit of Social Medicine, Göteborg University with the thesis Regional differences in disability pension and sickness absence with psychiatric diagnoses in Sweden and Norway from 1980 to 2000. The influence of demography and access to psychiatric health care. She is international coordinator for the department of social work, programme coordinator for the International Master programmes Social Work and Human Rights and course leader for the course health promotion and prevention within the joint university Master of Global Health. She has developed courses and taught in several subjects at the undergraduate and graduate level in social work and public health the University of Gothenburg, such as social differences in health, the right to health, social capital/networks, mental health and global health. Her research focuses on mental illness, disability, health behaviors, public health, barriers to care, the right to health, global health.

Ongoing research projects:

- Health and illness among undocumented migrants in Sweden. Research Council 521-2012-2927
- Barriers to health care and the right to health for persons with mental illness in South Africa: How can the access and the right to health be improved. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) SWE- 2010-226;
- HIV, adherence and mental health. Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division (HEARD), South Africa