

# MULTILINGUALISM IN OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN GERMANY

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**Background:** People with language barriers have disadvantages in the health care system (Ali & Watson, 2018). In Germany 37% of the immigrants have poor language skills in German (Liebau & Romiti, 2014). In general community interpreters are not paid by insurances. The data derive from a baseline survey ahead of the implementation of a nationwide pilot project based on a concept by the German Medical Association with the goal of integrating more patients with limited German language proficiency into regular outpatient mental health services by a qualified regional community interpreter system.

**Aims:** The health care study aims to gather data for patients with limited German speaking skills, language diversity of the health professionals and use and attitudes towards interpreters.

**Methods:** The study is being conducted in form of a census of all mental health professionals (psychotherapists and psychiatrists) working in outpatient services in the city state of Hamburg (N=1.690). The data were obtained by a three page self-report questionnaire that was mailed to the study population.

**Results:** Two third of all professionals (67%) replied to the survey. 8% off all patients in outpatient mental health care services do not speak German sufficient for adequate diagnosis or treatment. 17% of the professionals have rejected a treatment due to a language barriers in the last 6 months. Beside that 29% of all professionals have used a language other than German in outpatient care. If the funding of community interpreters was well regulated 56% of the professionals would integrate them more into work.

**Discussion:** A significant number of patients, who seek outpatient mental health care professionals, do not speak German sufficient. Due to limited linguistic diversity of mental health professionals a regional interpreter system is needed. There is a high willingness of professionals to work with qualified community interpreters.

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Learning Objectives

1)Participants will be able to assess the situation of outpatient mental health professionals in Germany in regard to multilingualism

2)Participants will be able to determine the challenges of MHP in regard to work with professional interpreters

#### References:

Ali, P. A., & Watson, R. (2018). Language barriers and their impact on provision of care to patients with limited English proficiency: Nurses' perspectives. *J Clin Nurs*, 27(5-6), e1152-e1160. doi:10.1111/jocn.14204

Liebau E, & Romiti A. (2014). Migranten investieren in Sprache und Bildung. IAB-Kurzbericht 21.2/2014