

Article: 1373

Topic: EPV11 - e-Poster 11: Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry

The Impact On Mental Health of the Economic Recession in the District of Sassuolo (Modena): Opinions of Local Occupational Physicians

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INTRODUCTION The recent economic recession and the subsequent strategy of austerity have decreased the amount of resources devoted to health care. They may also have contributed to the deterioration of the population health.

AIM To assess the impact on mental health of the economic recession in the district of Sassuolo (Modena), by collecting and analyzing opinions of local Occupational Physicians.

METHODS Qualitative survey, by *focus groups*, conducted in Sassuolo (Modena), industrial center of ceramics, involving 8 Occupational Physicians active in the area. Rough descriptions analyzed independently by GU and GM using MAXQDA, with the independent supervision of a third researcher (SF), according to the principles of the *General Grounded Theory*. The second *focus group* was intended as *respondent validation* of the first, yet it gathered further data, up to *theoretical saturation*.

RESULTS Two *focus groups*, about one hour long, attended by 8 Occupational Physicians, 7 during the first *focus group*, 4 during the second (of these, 3 attending both *focus groups*). The coding process yielded 261 segments, divided into four main areas: "changes in contemporary world" (16 coded segments), "social area" (82 coded segments), "medical area" (94 coded segments), "working area" (69 coded segments).

CONCLUSIONS The impact of the economic crisis on health produced mainly negative consequences, locally, consistently with national data. Psychiatrists should work together with Occupational Physicians to develop targeted interventions, addressing social, political and medical needs. A more structured *liaison* between Psychiatry and Occupational Medicine is an interesting and useful tool for future action and *advocacy*.