

Symposium | Multicultural Mental Health and Interpreting : [Symposium 91] Navigating Mental Health Systems: Informal Care, Multilingualism and Professional Interpreting

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## [Symposium 91] Navigating Mental Health Systems: Informal Care, Multilingualism and Professional Interpreting

Moderator: Mike Mösko (University of Applied Science Magdeburg-Stendal)

### [SY-91-01] Integration of professional interpreters in outpatient mental health care services – Germany´s first model project

\*Mike Mösko<sup>1</sup> (1. University of Applied Science Magdeburg-Stendal (Germany))

Keywords : professional interpreter, health care services, outpatient, model project

**Background:** In order to overbridge language barriers in mental health care services, a range of (in-)formal practices takes place globally, including use of family members, cleaning or security staff as ad-hoc interpreters, the use of receptive multilingualism, relying on machine translation or the rare use of professional interpreters. Due to missing political and legal support and unclear financing professional interpreters are hardly integrated into health care services. Germany's first model project is trying to overcome these barriers in outpatient mental health care services.

**Methods:** The model project consists of free of charge interpreters for all outpatient mental health professionals (n=1.900) in the state of Hamburg (Germany). For evaluation a mixed methods approach was used. Before the implementation a baseline-study was being conducted to all MHPs working in outpatient services. The process quality was assessed by 14 semi-structured qualitative interviews of interpreters and MHPs.

**Results:** Two third of all professionals (67%) replied to the survey. 8% of all patients do not speak German sufficient for adequate diagnosis or treatment. If the funding of professional interpreters was well regulated 56% of the professionals would integrate them more into work. After now eight years of the model project a total of 100 MPHs participate, a total of 5% of all MHPs. Currently 105 professional interpreters are providing services in 53 languages. In regard to working in the triad MHPs and interpreters mentioned different challenges and resources.

**Conclusion:** A significant number of patients, do not speak German sufficient. Despite a high willingness of the MPHs to work with professional interpreters, the vast majority of the professionals does not participate in this free of charge interpreter service. Integration of professional interpreters in mental health care services is not just a question of money, but also of motivating MHPs to work in a triad.