

Europe Fails to Meet the Target for Service Coverage for People with Mental Disorders

- *This is revealed by a systematic review of published studies on coverage in these pathologies in adults, published in **The Lancet Regional Health – Europe**.*
- *In general, there is little information about the capacity to provide services to people with mental disorders in the different European countries. The existing knowledge shows great disparity between each state and low coverage in practically all disorders.*
- *These data put at risk the World Health Organization's objective of increasing coverage for these patients by 50% by the year 2030.*

Barcelona, Novembre 6th, 2025. – The **rate of healthcare service coverage for mental disorders in Europe among the adult population** is scarce and insufficient. That is, the percentage of people with a mental disorder who receive some kind of treatment is, in some countries, practically zero, and in general, **the entire continent fails**. A new study, published in *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*, offers a very worrying picture of the situation in the continent in this field, with low coverage and even lower figures if we take into account the number of people who receive adequate treatment for their disorder.

The work, a systematic review of scientific articles published in the last two decades on this topic, has involved the participation of Dr. Jordi Alonso, coordinator of the Health Services Research Group at the Hospital del Mar Research Institute and Professor of Public Health at Pompeu Fabra University. The first conclusion of the study, which analyzed 45 publications, is, according to Alonso, that **"there is a very significant lack of data both by countries and by disorders, which makes it difficult to know what the starting point is."** The study is also signed by researchers from the World Health Organization, the University of Verona in Italy, the London School of Economics and King's College London in the United Kingdom, and the Global Mental Health Peer Network.

The review made it possible to verify that **only in severe mental disorders**, such as psychosis, do **European countries achieve high levels of coverage**. Between 50% and 90%, a great disparity that does not hide cases of very low coverage. In other pathologies, such as major depression, in countries like Belgium, 36% of people with the disorder have received some treatment, but only 11% have received it adequately. In anxiety disorder, the percentages range from 47% in Sweden to **7%** in Bulgaria. And in substance and/or alcohol use disorders, the percentages of adults receiving treatment are extremely low.

The most vulnerable groups are women, sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, immigrants, and homeless people. In the case of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), data are so scarce that it is difficult to make a diagnosis of the situation.

If we look at data from Spain, only one in three people with any kind of disorder receives some treatment. And less than 12% receive it adequately. In major depression, they represent 28% of the total, of which 18% have an appropriate approach. In anxiety, the figures are 29.5% and 12%. But in substance and alcohol use disorders, only 5.2% receive adequate treatment.

Press release

The set of these data ***"puts at risk the World Health Organization's goal of achieving a 50% increase in treatment coverage,"*** explains Dr. Alonso. They also show the great disparity and inequalities in healthcare service coverage across the continent, beyond the European Union. To reverse this, the researchers make a series of recommendations, both regarding supply and demand. But, first of all, they call for ***"a European mental disorder monitoring system that is harmonized and continuous,"*** adds Jordi Alonso.

Regarding supply, they call for more professionals and more funding to address the population's mental health, decentralization of services, and their integration into primary care. Also, person-centered care, work to reduce stigma, and inclusion of mental health within universal health coverage in all European countries.

Regarding demand, they call for educational campaigns about mental health and existing services, as well as to normalize talking about mental health. They advocate for empowering users and promoting participation and dialogue around treatments.

Reference Article

Corrado Barbui, Jordi Alonso, Dan Chisholm, Sara Evans-Lacko, Roxanne C. Keynejad, Ledia Lazeri, et al. *Mental health service coverage and gaps among adults in Europe: a systematic review*. 2025/10/01, PY-2025. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*. DOI: 10.1016/j.lanepe.2025.101458

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