A study exploring the mental health needs of asylum seekers, refugees and ethnic minority groups in the Wakefield District

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Aims

To understand mental well-being and distress of asylum seekers, refugees and minority ethnic groups in the Wakefield district, to explore uptake and barriers to mental health care and to make recommendations on service development.

Methodology

The research was a qualitative study including semi-structured interviews with 12 health professionals; 10 asylum seekers and

refugees; 9 minority ethnic group service users and local community members.

Key issues

The report describes the approach and methodology and compares the experiences of mental health problems, access to services and needs of asylum seekers, refugees and minority ethnic groups. Service providers recognised a need to change and improve outcomes, and were aware of lack of awareness about mental health and lack of knowledge of available services among asylum seekers, refugees and ethnic minority communities. Barriers identified include language and communication. Strengths and weaknesses in addressing some of these issues are outlined, including the need for cultural awareness staff training. Some differences in mental health problems between the groups are identified. Staff attitudes, mistrust, lack of sensitivity or understanding of cultural needs are considered to contribute to a perception among asylum seekers, refugees and minority ethnic groups that services did not meet their needs.

Conclusions

There is evidence of increasing awareness of the particular mental health needs of asylum seekers, refugees and minority ethnic groups, but more needs to be done to develop better quality culturally sensitive mental health services.

Recommendations

Recommendations for service providers in mental health cover education and promotion of mental health; promotion of self-help groups; staff development and training; multidisciplinary and interagency work; involvement of local communities in planning and implementation; and monitoring of improvements.

Migrant Group
Asylum seekers
Refugees
Topic
Health
Access to healthcare
Health needs
Mental health
Place
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
Year
2004
Resource Type
Report
Publisher
University of Huddersfield
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