



Outpatient mental health care in the 21st century: a public health perspective

Prof. dr. Ronny Bruffaerts, Center for Public Health Psychiatry; Universitair Psychiatrisch Centrum, KU Leuven (Leuven, Belgium), Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI, USA)

Both the organization and the effective service provision of mental health care in Belgium has changed dramatically the past decade. In a country that carries a historical legacy of a high number of psychiatric beds, long stays, and inpatient driven treatment policies, a vast deinstitutionalizing process demands continuous efforts to implement and evaluate novel approaches for both inpatient and outpatient treatment facilities. Using a public health perspective, we will discuss the rationale for deinstitutionalization the mental health system in Belgium, its mechanisms, challenges, and scientific evaluation, with specific attention to the role of outpatient treatment in the reforms.