Petros Skapinakis

The University of Ioannina Counselling Centre (Part 2). Use of a computerized fully structured psychiatric interview to screen for common mental disorders in a student population

Early adult life is a high risk period for the development of anxiety and depressive disorders. Students have additionally to cope with the stress of living their parent's home and achieve in their academic tasks. Screening for mental disorders in this population and optimizing treatment is very important. The aim of this presentation is to report on the methodology used in the University of Ioannina Counselling Centre to assess the common mental disorders in this population using a computerized version of the revised clinical interview schedule (CIS-R). We use a two stage design: Students first complete the 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire and the 2-item GAD questionnaire. At the second stage students above the specified cut-offs complete the CIS-R, a structured psychiatric interview that generates a profile of 14 common psychological symptoms and 5 psychiatric disorders using diagnostic algorithms according to ICD-10 criteria. During the pilot stage of the study we report on the feasibility of following this procedure in a student sample and present data on the validity and reliability of the project. We will also demonstrate the software we use. We conclude that the proposed computerized assessment may facilitate both clinical practice and university-based epidemiological research. It is a reliable, simple to use and time-effective tool in diagnosis formation that may also serve as a filter for counselling requests and facilitate student references. It is also possible to use an internet-based structured interview to assess the common mental disorders in student population.