

EUROPEAN GUIDANCE - A PROJECT OF THE EUROPEAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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Introduction: The European Psychiatric Association (EPA) created the European guidance project which will provide a series of guidance documents on topics related to the quality of mental healthcare service structures and the prevention of mental disorders, for which evidence- and consensus-based guidelines are currently lacking.

Objectives: To provide information on good clinical practice, using problem solving examples, guidelines and quality standards of care for European providers of mental healthcare, national societies and health authorities, to address health care gaps, and to give advice on developing research programs.

Aims: The aim of the “EPA Guidance on the quality of mental health services” is the provision of recommendations for optimal structures of mental healthcare services by identifying and evaluating the current evidence and comparing the efficacy of different service structures wherever possible.

Methods: Recommendations, which were divided into structure recommendations and process recommendations, were developed on the basis of systematic literature researches and a peer review process within the EPA. Recommendations were supplemented by quality indicators and their evidence base was graded by a three-part evidence rating system.

Results: In total, 30 evidence- and consensus-based recommendations were developed, which comprise ten general and six service-type-specific structure recommendations, and four general and ten specific process recommendations.

Conclusion: The initial panel of recommendations on European mental healthcare service structures needs to be tested in each European country with the aim to further develop the recommendations based on the feedback from users.