

PATIENT'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND INPATIENT DEPRESSION TREATMENT

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Objective: To analyze process and outcome quality of inpatient depression treatment depending on German language proficiency.

Method: Documentation of patients in 24 psychiatric hospitals in Baden-Württemberg (South Germany). The following three groups were matched according to age, gender, and education: native German speakers, non-native speakers with good German proficiency, and non-native speakers with limited German proficiency (67 in each group).

Results: Germans received more group psychotherapy than the other two groups ($p=.003$). No differences were found regarding pharmacotherapy. Non-native speakers with limited German proficiency were discharged an average of 19 days earlier than German speakers and 7 days earlier than non-native speakers with good German proficiency ($p=.02$). Compared to Germans, twice as many non-native patients with good German proficiency and nearly four times as many patients with limited German proficiency were discharged with depressive symptoms ($p=.006$).

Conclusion: Results confirm the significance of linguistic factors for the effectiveness of treatment of depressive patients and show a direct impact of linguistic factors on length of hospitalization.