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Social Support Network and Rehabilitation Referrals Through Hospital Social Workers Network in Greece in Time of Crisis

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Introduction: Social support networks, with greater support from families, friends and communities are linked to better health. Also, due to the present economic condition they might be the only solution for rehabilitation in patients with lower income.

Aim: To investigate the way that social support network can help patients with rehabilitation after hospitalization.

Method: All patients that were referred to the social workers network from 2012-2013 were assessed in order to find those who seek rehabilitation programmes. Analysis was performed with SPSS21.

Results: 143 patients, 100(69.9%) males, 81(71.7%) with lower education were referred for rehabilitation and poverty reasons. 117(81.8%) were Greeks 75(52.4%) single, 99(69.2%) had no insurance and 125(87.4%) unemployed. The referrals were made mostly from social hospices (N=71) and the hospital clinics(N=59), while the amount of patients was almost identical for the two years(47.6% for 2013 and 50.4% for 2012 respectively). The main reason for the referral was poverty(N=117 81.8%), poverty and health problems(N=22 18.4%), psychiatric problems(N=2 1.4%) and HIV(N=2 1.4%). In the majority of the cases(N=106 74.1%) there was a successful result in finding a rehabilitation hospice. Finally, there was a statistical significant difference between those that had family-support(N=47) and those that didn't(N=96) in the referrals amount ($\chi^2=10.894$ $p=.02$).

Conclusions: Results indicates that family is a protective factor against social support need, but due to the economic condition and new family bonds, a growing number of people still needing help, even if they have a family that could support them, something that should be further investigated.