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1. Introduction

The identification of factors that may facilitate or hinder the implementation of evidence based practices and subsequent innovation in mental health (MH) settings is an area of recent development. Studies regarding organisational culture of services are widespread in economical and managerial areas but very few evaluate MH care contexts. Most of these studies aim to help in the management of human resources.

2. Objectives

Assess the organisational culture and leadership profiles in the Portuguese MH services.

3. Methods

Cross-sectional study, made in public mental health services. Evaluation was made by means of the competing values framework tool (Quinn, 1990) (Portuguese version - MJ Felício, 2007), which includes dimensions such as organizational culture and leadership profiles in the framework of more open or closed systems and with more control or flexibility strategies.

4. Results

The leadership profile clearly outstanding in the Portuguese MH services was the Mentor profile (45.6%), followed by the Broker and Producer profiles (12.8%). Innovation profile, linked with the ability to cope and manage change, had the lowest score (3.5%).

5. Conclusion

Further studies are critical to develop a clearer view regarding the influence of organisational culture and leadership profiles in the organisation of MH services. Low scores on innovation components may influence the way evidence based practices are welcomed and implemented in services. Organisational culture may have an important role in the implementation of best practices, namely for the design of programmes that aim to translate evidence into everyday care.