

NON-ATTENDANCE AT INITIAL APPOINTMENTS IN AN OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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INTRODUCTION

Non-attendance at initial appointments is an important problem in our outpatient settings and has consequences such as decreased efficient use of resources and delayed attention to patients who attend their visits, and that compromises quality of care.

OBJECTIVES

To identify and describe the characteristics of patients who don't attend the first appointment in an adult outpatient mental health center, located in a poor neighborhood of Barcelona.

METHOD

Retrospective study. The sample was made up from all patients who had a first appointment during 2014 in our outpatient mental health centre. Sociodemographic and clinical data (type of first appointment, reason for consultation, origin of derivation, priority, history of mental health problems) were described. The results were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package.

RESULTS

A total of 275 patients were included. The 26.2% (72) did not attend their first appointment, with mean age 39,75 years and 51,4% were male. Most frequent problems for consultation were anxiety (41,7%), depression (26,4%) and psychosis and behavioral problems (11,2%). The origin was primary care (83,3%), social services (4,2%) and psychiatric emergencies (2,8%). Most of them were not preferential or urgent (86,1%). The 51,4% of non-attenders had history of psychiatric problems and 13,9% nowadays are patients of our mental health center.

Table 1. Main characteristics of the first non-attended appointments

| | mean (SD) |
|---|-------------|
| Age | 39,8 (13,0) |
| | % (n) |
| Gender (men) | 51,4 (37) |
| Psychiatric appointment | 44,4 (32) |
| Psychological appointment | 55,6 (40) |
| History of previous vinculation to the mental health centre | 51,4 (37) |
| Current vinculation to the mental health centre | 13,9 (10) |

Figure 1. Reason for consultation (%)

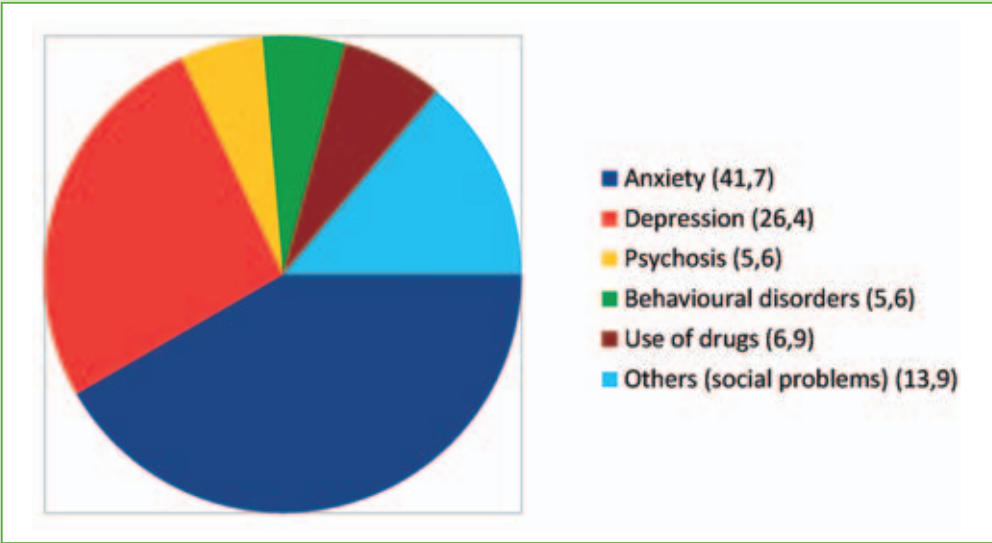


Figure 2. First appointment's origin (%)

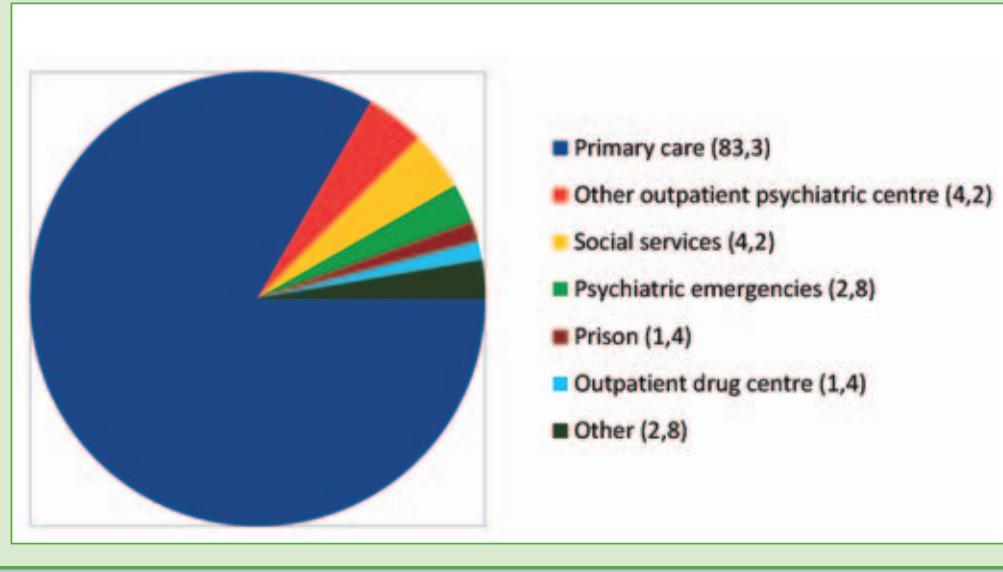
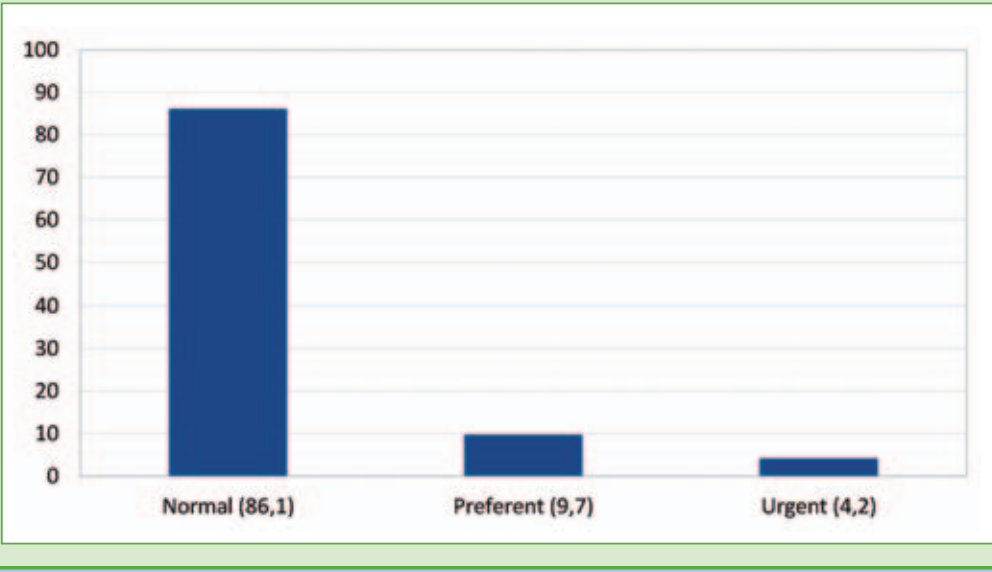


Figure 3. Priority (%)



CONCLUSIONS

It is important to develop mechanisms that can reduce the incidence of first non-attended appointments. In our case most of them are attended by primary care so we can establish better communication with our colleagues and try to contact to the patients before to remind them the date of the appointment .