

The surveillance of new cases of depression in a Belgian network of sentinel family practices

Depression is high on the agenda of policy makers and health care providers. The development of a Belgian guideline on depression in family practice, lack of data and eagerness of the network members were the main reasons to set up a pilot registration study of new cases of depression. The aim is to describe the incidence of depression and quality of care. Patient characteristics include symptoms, risk factors, incapacity to work and health services use. In our pilot study we asked to register 5 new cases of depression and to complete follow-up forms afterwards. We also ask to comment the registration, particularly the completeness and clarity of instructions and registration forms. The Belgian guideline, a literature review and discussion were used for the research protocol and registration forms. In April all members of our network were asked to volunteer for the pilot. Mid June, participants received 5 registration forms, an instruction sheet and a questionnaire. They were asked to describe 1) prospectively 3 new cases between mid-June and mid-August and 2) retrospectively 2 new cases seen between March and April. After 2 months, they will receive follow-up forms covering 6 months for patients registered in spring, and 2 months for patients registered in summer. 98 of 170 eligible GPs volunteered for the pilot. The main results and conclusions will be presented at the conference.

N. Boffin, V. Van Casteren