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Mapping the UASC's psychosocial difficulties, mental health problems, and MHPSS services in Greece

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ABSTRACT

Aims of study: The mapping of (1) the psychosocial needs and difficulties experienced by UASC who live in long-term facilities in Greece, according to the perception of facility coordinators, field psychologists and directors of community child and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS) to whom minors are being referred to; (2) the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services provided to UASC; and (3) the gaps, obstacles, and good practices in MHPSS service provision for UASC across the country.

Methodological design: An exploratory, predominantly quantitative design was adopted to map the UASC's psychosocial difficulties, mental health problems, and MHPSS service delivery.

Data collection and analysis: A total purposive sampling procedure was implemented, with the participation of all organizations which provide long term accommodation to UASC, except one. The sample comprised 101 participants: 45 Facility coordinators, 40 field psychologists, and 16 directors of CAMHS to which UASC are referred to. A 5-W mapping tool (Who, Where, What, When, Which) was used to collect data, through an online survey. Quantitative methods (descriptive statistics) and qualitative methods (content analysis) were used for data analysis.

Findings: This study revealed that Greece, lacks a comprehensive, robust, well-coordinated, and periodically evaluated strategic plan to assess and support of UASC who experience psycho-social difficulties or mental health problems. Even though some good practices have been identified through the provision of opportunities that enhance the well-being of UASC, the psychosocial support is compromised by communication difficulties with UASC, the lack of a shared philosophy of care among

facility employees, and organizational challenges due to understaffing, job insecurity, and limited resources. Although a referral procedure is in place for UASC with mental health problems, long delays before assessing a minor by CAMHS personnel, and the lack of established procedures for follow-up and for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, are issues that compromise the quality of support provided to UASC with mental health problems.

Next steps: The results of this study will be used for a further in-depth exploration of the psychosocial and mental health services provided to UASC through focus-groups and in-depth interviews with facility and CAMHS personnel, as well as UASC living in long-term accommodation facilities in Greece.

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