Abstract

Objective: To investigate mental health dropout rates in secondary care and to identify possible associations between this variable and social, demographic, psychopathologic, and health care process-related variables. Method: This prospective, observational study included 994 patients referred to a secondary service by four primary care units and evaluated by a specialist mental health team between 2004 and 2008. The dependent variable was treatment dropout. Bivariate analyses investigated possible associations between treatment dropout and 57 independent variables. Results: The overall dropout rate from specialist mental health treatment was relatively low (mean = 25.6%). Only four independent variables were associated with dropout: one socioeconomic, two psychopathological, and one health care process variable. All associations were marginally significant (p < 0.1). Conclusion: Our findings suggest that family members, patients, and health care professionals are well engaged in this mental health care system based on a model of primary care. The use of this mental health model of care should be extended to other regions of our country.

Keywords

Patient dropouts, mental health, secondary health care, quality of health care.