MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE – SANTÉ MENTALE EUROPE
Boulevard Clovis 7, B-1000 Brussels
Tel *32-2-280.04.68 – Fax *32-2-280.16.04
http://www.mhe-sme.org/

and

LSE Health and Social Care, London School of Economics,
Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE,
Tel +44-20-7955-6225
Fax +44-20-7955-6131

Mental Health Economics
Final Report on Execution of Activities
Grant Agreement SPC. 2002397

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Final report on execution of activities

1. Introduction

Following the European Commission (EC) seminar “Future Mental Health Challenges in Europe: The Impact of Other Policies on Mental Health” 3-4 September 2001, Brussels, Belgium, where the absence of economic reflection on the impact of environment policies, social welfare policies and education policies on mental health was pointed out, Mental Health Europe felt the need to initiate a European project on mental health economics.

Health economics is appearing regularly as a topic with increasing frequency in the media, in health journals and in health politics generally. Its influence on mental health is small, but growing. It is recognized increasingly that health economics has a positive contribution to make to policy decisions, the development of health promoting strategies and to the evaluation of preventive interventions.

The Mental Health Economics project (Agreement N° SPC.2002397) started on 1 November 2002 and ended on 1 August 2004. It was initially foreseen to last 18 months, but an extension of 3 months was asked to the EC, given the large amount of data collected and the need to maximise the analysis and reflect in a measured way on the findings.

The project has been run by Mental Health Europe (MHE), a broadly representative NGO in the field of mental health, both geographically in Europe and thematically in its membership and partnership representation, and by a research group from London School of Economics – Health and Social Care (LSE).

Partners from 17 European Members States contributed to the project: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

1.1. Main objectives and expected results

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Main objectives</th>
<th>Expected results</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. To prepare a framework for identifying and collecting data on the primary economic dimensions relevant to mental health systems in EU Member States and Norway and Iceland;</td>
<td>1. A Network will be established with mental health economics experts from EU Member States and EEA countries to provide high quality expertise to EU institutions.</td>
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<td>2. To build up information and indicators for the Member States which would allow comparisons to be made, and also provide the means for better understanding of how mental health systems might be developed;</td>
<td>2. The output of information and analysis of data on mental health economics will be the product of a project in which EU Member States of the EU and EEA countries will have participated.</td>
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<td>3. To use the Network as the means for learning about economic issues in mental health in Member States and in Norway and Iceland.</td>
<td>3. Health economics methodology will be introduced to mental health planning, evaluation and monitoring. Economic indicators will be explored with a view to their future use in the Member States.</td>
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1.2. Responsibilities

Mental Health Europe (MHE) assured the management co-ordination of the project, the financial management and the liaison with the technical co-ordinators and the network partners in the Member States and EEA countries.

The London School of Economics (Personal Service Research Unit, LSE – Health and Social Care) was responsible for the technical co-ordination of the project and for leading the research and analytical work.

The national partners were responsible for presenting a description of ongoing work in mental health economics in their country and identifying and collecting data through response to questionnaires and participating in relevant meetings to be held during the project period (reimbursed by the co-ordinator according to the rules set by the European Commission.

2. Mental Health Economics European Network

The project provided the framework to create a Mental Health Economics European Network, ( Annex I- List of Network members), including representatives from the 15 old EU Member States and Norway and Iceland with expertise and experience of health economics and/or mental health, recruited from various backgrounds: research, educational, governmental and other institutions.

The Network partners have been involved in a substantial manner in the project, in order to identify key issues to work on, to share experience and information.

The Network proved to be an example of positive approach to improving co-operation across EU and EEA Member States, by offering a valuable body of expertise in mental health economics.

Contracts were signed between MHE and the institutions represented by the Network partners and a sub-contract was signed with the technical co-ordinator: LSE-Health and Social Care.

The three meetings held under the framework of the project offered opportunities to learn from each other, to transfer knowledge and methodology, to seek the benefits of concerted action and, overall, to achieve a significant European added value.

2.1. First Network meeting, 29 November-1 December 2002, Brussels

The aim of the meeting was to provide an opportunity to identify key issues and themes across the 17 countries represented by the Network and to reflect on the current use and influence of economic analysis in the mental health field.

The Network partners were invited to make a short presentation on three mental health economics issues of key importance in their countries and they were asked to reflect on several topics of interest for the European Commission (EC). The feedback provided was the basis upon which the LSE research group structured seven modules to be covered by the project: (1) financing of mental health care systems; (2) expenditure and costs; (3) provision, services and professionals; (4) employment; (5) economic evaluations – summary position, (6) epidemiological data with potential for economic analysis, and (7) resource allocation. ( Annex II – Minutes of first Network meeting)

Following the first Network meeting, a questionnaire on the financing of mental health care system (theme of the first module) was prepared by the research group from LSE. ( Annex III – Questionnaire on the Financing of Mental Health care Systems).
2.2. Second Network meeting, 6-7 June 2003, Brussels

Although in the project proposal, two sub-group meetings were foreseen, after the first Network meeting, it was considered more enriching and practical to gather the entire Network for a full meeting.

The aim of the meeting was thus to decide how the other six modules (of the seven modules identified following the first meeting) would be prioritised and also to discuss the intentions for the future regarding the publication of paper(s) authored by the Network, the possible extension of the work of the Network and expansion in other countries.

The Network partners were asked to make some brief presentations on what they think the Network should cover under the six remaining modules. (Annex IV – Minutes of 2nd Network meeting)

Other three questionnaires were subsequently prepared by the research group at LSE following the feedback provided by Network partners: a questionnaire in employment and mental health, a questionnaire on economic evaluations and a last one on resource allocation in mental health.

2.3. Final Network meeting, 24-25 June 2004, Brussels

The aim of the meeting was mainly to discuss two draft papers prepared by LSE group on mental health financing in the EU and on mental health and employment.

The papers provide a synthesis and analysis of the seventeen individual country reports prepared by the Network partners, supplemented by the use of additional database and published literature. They describe systems and arrangements in the countries covered by the project as the basis for making suggestions and turn them into policy recommendations.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss also about information collected from the third questionnaire on economic evaluation and about the fourth questionnaire on resources allocation in mental health.

The Network partners were equally asked to give input on the final report to be submitted to the EC and on lessons for the future. Further discussions were dedicated to ideas about dissemination of the project results and to a possible continuation with a second project - Mental Health Economics II. (Annex V – Minutes of 3rd Network meeting)

2.4. Questionnaires

During the duration of the project, the Network partners were invited to complete four questionnaires:

2.4.1. Questionnaire on the Financing of Mental Health Care Systems
- The aim was to obtain an overview of how mental health care systems were financed across the 17 partner countries, namely an overview of health (and especially mental health) care financing, of non-health services for people with mental health problems and of data collection systems.

2.4.2. Questionnaire on Mental health and Employment
- aimed to gather existing information on employment rates for people with mental health problems, on impact of mental health problems on absenteeism or lost productivity, on barriers to employment for people with mental health problems and interventions designed to support them. (Annex VI – Mental Health and Employment Questionnaire)
2.4.3. **Questionnaire on economic evaluations**

-sought to obtain some insight into how economic evidence may be used in some countries, both in terms of its role in influencing access to treatment and service interventions and in terms of the capacity to conduct health economic research. *(Annex VII – Questionnaire on economic evaluation in decision making)*

2.4.4. **Questionnaire on resources allocation**

-sought to obtain some information on overall funding available for mental health, on the process by which the resources that are collected through taxation, social insurance, etc. are allocated to mental health services. *(Annex VIII – Questionnaire on resource allocation)*

2.5. **Other meetings and activities related to the project**

The project and the activity of the Mental Health Economics Network were presented and discussed at Mental Health Europe General Assembly, in Paris, 20 October 2003. Interest was expressed by participants for the novelty of the project and emphasis was made on the need of mental health economics analysis for health decision making.

A consultation meeting was held in London on 25 February 2004, gathering MHE staff working on the project and the research group from LSE in order to plan how the work will be structured and the aim of the final meeting and possibilities of dissemination.

The Network members acted as discussants, workshop leaders and rapporteurs at the EC Conference in Bilbao “*New challenges, new opportunities*”. The project co-ordinator equally attended the conference, participating to the workshop on mental health economics.

Other meetings related to the project included a travel to Stockholm to discuss with the Swedish partner opportunities to find additional finance resources for the Network and a travel to Trieste Mental Health Europe General Assembly 2004, (Nova Gorica, Slovenia).

2.6. **Visibility of the Network and project**

A strong feature of the Network since its establishment in late 2002 has been its high visibility during various international meetings, providing opportunity for expanding knowledge on the activity of the Network and on the benefits of mental health economics practice. Strong links have been developed with policy makers in many EU countries. A few examples:

- The European Commission seminar *Future Mental Health Challenges in Europe*, 11-12 December 2002, Luxembourg;
- The World Health Organisation meeting of the European mental health counterparts, 28-30 April 2003, Madrid;
- The European Commission Conference *Mental Health in Europe – New Challenges, New Opportunities*, 9-11 October, 2003, Bilbao;
- The Ministerial Conference *Mental Illness and Stigma*, 27-29 March 2003, Athens;
- the LSE International Conference on Mental Health Economics and Policy in a Global Context, 30 May 2003, London, etc
- the conference “Illness and employment – retaining the link to work”, 17-18 November 2003, Reggio Calabria;
- the European Commission Meetings of the Mental Health Working Party (first meeting: 25-26 November 2003, Luxembourg; second meeting 22-23 September 2004, Luxembourg);
Moreover, the Network has been contributing to background documents to the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health “Facing the challenges, building solution”, 12-15 January 2005, Helsinki, that will be jointly organised by the World Health Organisation, the European Commission and the Council of Europe with the support of several Member States. Experience has been shared with the WHO of developing the Mental Health Economics European Network, which WHO might want to follow elsewhere in the world.

Links have been established also with the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion co-ordinated by Mr. Karl Kuhn at the Federal Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in Germany and with the International Mental Health Promotion Action Network o-ordinated by Eva Jane Llopis, at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

2.7. Information and dissemination

Information articles on the activities of the Network and development of the project were published every month in Mental Health Europe’s Newsletter, in English and French.

A new website was created in February 2003 on mental health economics, under the auspices of the LSE research group, which has been vehicle for information and dissemination of the work of the Network and project outcomes. (http://www.mentalhealth-econ.org/).

Target journals in which the results of the project are intended to be published for rapid dissemination of policy implications and awareness raising are: The Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics, Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, The European Journal of Public Health, Eurohealth.

A special issue of the International Journal of Mental Health is in preparation with contributions from the Mental Health Economics European Network members.

**List annexes**

Annex I List of Mental Health Economics European Network members
Annex II Minutes of first Network meeting
Annex III Questionnaire on the Financing of Mental Health Care Systems
Annex IV Minutes of 2nd Network meeting
Annex V Minutes of 3rd Network meeting
Annex VI Mental Health and Employment Questionnaire
Annex VII Questionnaire on economic evaluation in decision making
Annex VIII Questionnaire on ressource allocation
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