



# Effectiveness of treatment in the first Croatian community mental health team for the treatment of persons with serious mental disorders

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## Introduction

According to Croatian guidelines for psychosocial treatment for patients with psychoses recovery is a goal of treatment, the treatment is planning on the base of bio-psycho-social formulation and separate assessment of symptoms of mental illness and functioning. Biopsychosocial formulation refers to the hypothesis explaining why the problem has occurred and what causes the problem to persist. For persons diagnosed with serious mental illness with long term difficulties in social functioning, frequent hospitalisations and need for multiple services, community mental health team has been recommended. For this group of patient assessment of psycho-bio-social needs by Camberwell assessment of need (CAN) is also recommended. In Croatia treatment by community team has been provided during the project "Implementation of community mental health teams" supported by Ministry of Health, as an implementation of recommendations of European twinning project "Ensuring optimal health care for people with mental health disorders" recently provided in Croatia.

## Treatment, goals and evaluation of community mental health team

Treatment is based on recovery and empowerment orientation with support the patient's goals, social network and social inclusion as opposed to focusing on clinical psychopathology outcome. Psychosocial interventions provided by mobile team include: symptom management and psychoeducation with early sign recognition and prevention of relapse, stress management skills, social skills training, family interventions, medication adherence and self-stigma prevention program. Supportive therapeutic relationship has been provided in the framework of guidelines for good treatment patient-therapist relationship according to Croatian guideline for psychosocial treatment of psychoses and has been considered essential for improvement of mental health and recovery process.

During the treatment provided by mobile team, monitoring and evaluation in the area of symptoms, functioning and recovery has been provided. Assessment of social functioning has been provided every three months in order to evaluate the achievement of treatment goals.

**Treatment team:** Treatment base on individual treatment plan has been provided by a multidisciplinary team consist of psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, social worker, psychologist and peer worker.

**Goals of this study:** is to discuss the results of treatment measure by social functioning scale (Štrkalj Ivezic 2016) in the first Croatian community mental health team for persons with serious mental illness.

## Sample and assessment

The study included 20 patients with diagnose of schizophrenia, schizoaffective and bipolar disorder with long term impairments of social functioning, frequent exacerbation of illness or psychiatric hospitalizations who have spent at least 6 months in the treatment of community mental health team. Social functioning scale (SF) including area from WHO ICF classification of functioning was use in assessing the social functioning. The assessment was done by casemanager. SF assess the following areas: 1 Communication skills (verbal and nonverbal) 2. Self-perception and verbalisation of emotions 3. Organization/planning skills 4. Impulse control 5. Relationships /social roles 6. Self-care, 7. Cognition functioning, 8. Work 9. Leisure 10. Support, 11 Attitudes and stigma. The assessment were provided at the beginning of the treatment and after a 6 months.



**Results** on SF show improvement in functioning in majority of assessed areas after 6 months of treatment (table 1). In most patients there were a reduction in the need for hospitalization, if it was needed it was voluntary, with the shorter day stay in hospital.

## Discussion and conclusions

1. Social functioning scale has proven to be a reliable instrument for assessing the social functioning in relation to treatment goals.
2. Ensuring continued support in therapeutic relationship base on trust, recovery orientation that includes hope and optimism, encouraging personal responsibility, rights for taking the risk and learning from crisis situations has been key to progress in social functioning.
3. The quality of the patient-therapist relationship was identified as a key factor for improvement in functioning as well as possibilities to provide evidence base psychosocial interventions such as social skills training and family treatment.
4. Without possibility of home treatment by community mental health team a large number of persons with serious mental disorder live socially excluded, are hospitalized without consent, spent a long time in hospital and very often stop the treatment.

Table 1 Results on social functioning scale (SF)

RB.	1. COMMUNICATION		2. SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND FEELINGS		3. ORGANIZATION SKILLS		4. IMPULS CONTROL		5. RELATIONSHIP SOCIAL ROLES		6. SELF-CARE		7. COGNITION		8. WORK		9. LEASURE		10. SUPPORT		11. ATTITUDES AND STIGMA	
	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC	1.PROC	2.PROC
1.	93	36	22	20	57	27	38	17	16	10	29	24	16	10	22	17	15	10	11	10	6	3
2.	58	41	30	16	50	23	6	4	14	5	19	16	14	5	9	13	5	4	6	6	7	2
3.	61	45	35	25	59	40	30	21	20	16	28	20	20	16			14	12	7	5	9	6
4.	54	29	24	10	48	28	31	10	8	4	20	9	8	4	18	17	15	10	8	4	7	5
5.	110	48	45	30	55	45	39	30	11	7	25	16	11	7	25	10	16	12	15	14	9	7
6.	84	50	48	22	49	38	19	15	9	7	42	20	9	7			12	10	11	7	6	5
7.	75	69	50	48	70	65	10	7	8	8	43	40	8	8			18	16	7	6	8	8
8.	104	105	45	39	65	60	45	40	19	18	49	47	19	18			17	13	4	4	3	3
9.	53	29	15	11	55	50	28	26	14	13	14	13	14	13			10	6	12	11	3	2
10.	89	56	22	19	54	43	39	28	17	12	30	26	17	12			11	10	10	7	4	3
11.	120	86	38	30	68	60	44	39	16	13	55	50	16	13			13	9	11	6	3	3
12.	50	45	30	25	24	22	32	29	14	12	16	15	14	12			12	11	8	6	2	2
13.	102	88	29	21	54	49	33	29	16	15	28	22	16	15			14	13	6	5	3	2
14.	69	54	28	14	31	26	20	17	7	6	22	19	7	6			9	6	4	3	6	4
15.	107	85	23	20	67	60	56	50	18	14	34	29	18	14			15	12	8	6	3	2
16.	70	58	29	19	48	39	48	47	15	14	18	13	15	14			14	11	6	4	2	2
17.	35	26	20	12	16	9	7	5	15	14	4	4	15	14			10	9	8	7	3	2
18.	52	47	16	12	54	16	28	20	13	10	32	30	13	10			11	9	6	4	5	4
19.	133	105	32	30	48	46	55	53	24	20	53	52	24	20			13	11	7	3	2	2
20.	93	55	52	39	24	9	18	10	8	4	21	16	8	4			19	14	5	3	3	2
<b>Average.</b>	<b>80,6</b>	<b>57,85</b>	<b>31,65</b>	<b>23,1</b>	<b>49,8</b>	<b>37,75</b>	<b>31,3</b>	<b>24,85</b>	<b>14,1</b>	<b>11,1</b>	<b>29,1</b>	<b>24,5</b>	<b>14,4</b>	<b>11,2</b>	<b>18,5</b>	<b>14,25</b>	<b>13,15</b>	<b>10,4</b>	<b>8,0</b>	<b>6,05</b>	<b>4,7</b>	<b>3,45</b>