

NePP Needs for Primary Prevention and Health Literacy in Families with Mentally Ill Parents

Children with mentally ill parents inherit an increased risk to develop a mental disorder during their adolescence and adulthood. Although preventive programs have been initialized in the last years, these offers are far from reaching a sufficient number of families.

The subproject NePP, settled in the work block “Mental Health Literacy” as part of the HLCA network, is taking the situation of families with mentally ill parents into account. The aim of this project is to assess the Mental Health Literacy in these families and to build a basis for the adjustment of primary preventive programs to meet the families’ needs.

We are especially interested in the following research questions:

- Which needs do the families have and how can their help-seeking behaviour be described?
- How do the families experience different forms of help?
- Which theories about parental mental illness and coping possibilities can be identified in the families?
- Which influence do (socio-) demographic characteristics like gender, socioeconomic status or ethnicity have on these issues?

To gain insight into the subjective perspective of the families, a qualitative research design is chosen. 25 family interviews are planned. In terms of triangulation, the mentally ill parent, a child between 7 and 14 years of age and a third family member (e.g. spouse, grandparent) will be interviewed. The families will be recruited at the LWL psychiatric clinics at Warstein and Lippstadt (Contact: Dr. Ewald Rahn).

Concerning the analytical method, the use of a content analysis method is planned. The results should give indications for therapeutic/psychiatric practice and preventive work.

The project is implemented as a cooperation between the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia (division Paderborn) and the Bielefeld University under the project leadership of Prof. Albert Lenz. The research assistants in this project are Patricia Wahl and Dirk Bruland.

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