

Needs for Primary Prevention in Families with Mentally Ill Parents

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Abstract—Children of mentally ill parents are a large high risk group for mental disorders which is hardly reached by preventive programs. The children inherit a heightened risk to develop a mental disorder themselves during their lifetime, but they and their parents are often rejecting to seek help. To elicit the factors determining this prevention dilemma, an explorative qualitative interview study is conducted in 25 families with mentally ill parents and yet unaffected children. Inclusion criteria are the children's age (7 to 14 years old) and that these children live together with the affected parent. With regard to the concept of Mental Health Literacy the following research questions are leading the Qualitative Content Analysis: What are the needs of families with mentally ill parents? How can their help-seeking behaviour be described? What are their subjective illness theories? And which influences do gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status have on needs, help-seeking and illness theories? Mental Health Literacy relates to the knowledge and attitudes towards mental disorders influencing the recognition, management or prevention of these disorders. The concept seems to be an interesting starting point for our analysis with the aim to understand antecedences and processes in the families more deeply. Results of an extensive literature review serve as deductive framework for our analysis, first findings from the interviews will be available up to the time of the conference and can be presented. They hopefully will give inside in the families' living environment and help to adapt/develop interventions and in the long term reduce health inequalities. The project at hand is part of the Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence (HLCA) Research Consortium financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Keywords—Children of Mentally Ill Parents, Prevention Dilemma, Mental Health Literacy, Help-seeking Behaviour

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