

# Prevention of Depression and Anxiety in Primary Health Care

**Rumiana Dinolova-Hodgadjikova<sup>1</sup>, Hristo Hinkov<sup>1</sup>, Zahari Zarkov<sup>1</sup>,  
Vaska Stancheva-Popkostadinova<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>National Center for Public Health prevention and Analysis, Sofia, Bulgaria

<sup>2</sup>South West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

## Email address:

[rdinolova@abv.bg](mailto:rdinolova@abv.bg) (R. Dinolova-Hodgadjikova)

## Abstract:

Depression and anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders in our society. Some recent studies claim that 11.4 % of Bulgarians suffer from anxiety disorders, and 6.2%-from depressive disorders.

The objectives of the paper is to present the results of the awareness raising and training in mental health professionals for dealing with depression and anxiety in the frame of the project “Improved mental health services”, funded by EEA and Norway grants’ scheme.

The training consists of 2 parts. The first stage aims to increase knowledge of General practitioners, psychologists and social workers in early identification and interventions in anxiety disorders and depression in primary practice. The training was developed and implemented in 2 stages. The training through the first stage was conducted in a form of electronic course. In advance electronic portal was particularly developed for the purposes of the project. As for the second stage of the training, 3-day face-to-face workshops were organized. Furthermore, a Manual for helping professions for early identification of depression and anxiety in primary health care was written and distributed to the participants.

A total of 2500 general practitioners, psychologists and social workers from South-West, South Central and North central regions of Bulgaria registered in the electronic platform for the specialized training, however, 2300 completed the training (1300 completed only the online training, while 1000 completed both stages of the training).

The aim of the second part of the training was to prepare 53 experts within 28 Regional Health inspections from all over the country for implementation of programs for primary and secondary suicide prevention in schools. Interactive workshops with duration of 3 days were organized.

Educational materials with stress on anxiety, depression, aggression, self-harm behaviour, sexual health was developed for the population of students from 8th to 11th grades. Moreover, on the website of the project are available booklets on depression, anxiety, violence and suicide prevention, as well as guidelines for teachers on how to talk to their students on these topics.

The outcomes of the practitioners’ training from primary health care practice and Regional health inspections are discussed in the framework of existing and relevant legislation and professional standards and possibilities for future dissemination and sustainability.

## Keywords

Mental Health, Promotion, Prevention, Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Problem-based Teaching, Online Training