

# High school students and mental health knowledge: a comparison between European countries.

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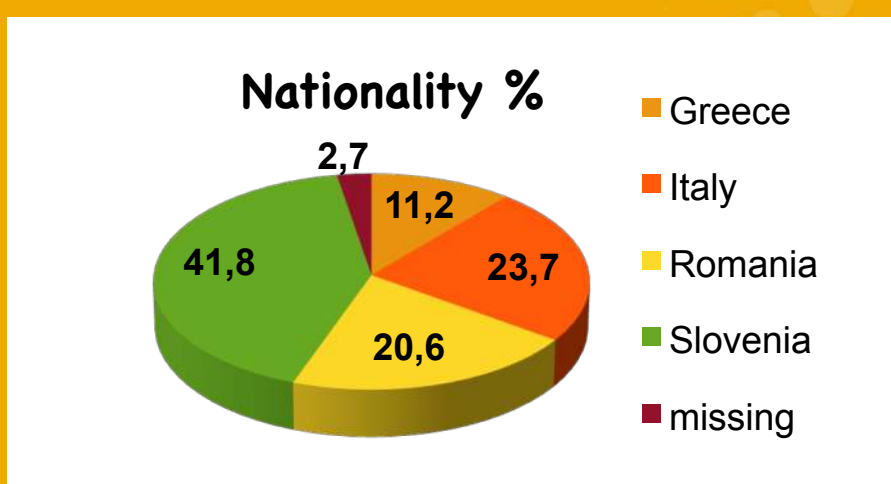
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**INTRODUCTION:** Delay in recognizing mental disorders and accessing treatment still remains an unsolved problem in youth mental health strategies. Several studies suggest that increasing mental health literacy (MHL) could reduce stigma and enhance help-seeking behavior. The present study, cofinanced by the European Union as part of the Project «Mai Più», was to evaluate students' knowledge about mental health in four European countries (Italy, Greece, Romania, Slovenia).

**METHODS:** The sample consisted of 547 (133 Italian; 63 Greek; 116 Romanian; 235 Slovenian) high school students, with average age 15,8 yrs (range 15-21 yrs). The project included a training on MHL. A 24 items questionnaire was administered to investigate students' knowledge on the etiology, onset and prevention of severe mental disorders.

**RESULTS:** Our data suggest that levels of stigmatization and prejudice differ among European countries. Differences among countries regarding knowledge of prevention and treatment of mental disorders were also found.

Sample characteristics			
	Category	N.	%
<b>Gender</b>			
	Female	290	53
	Male	253	46,2
<b>School</b>			
	Center	361	64,2
	Suburb	157	27,9
<b>Counseling service</b>			
	yes	402	71,5
	no	115	20,5



**CONCLUSIONS:** Preliminary data suggest that educational campaigns about mental disease are needed to improve students' knowledge of mental disorders, as well as to reduce stigma and boundaries to help-seeking behavior.

ETIOLOGY			
Mental illness is a genetic disorder %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	17,5	44,4	38,1
Italy	9	60,1	30,8
Romania	52,6	34,5	12,9
Slovenia	18,3	48,9	32,8
total	23,2	48,1	28,7
Problematic human relationships can cause mental illness %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	79,4	4,8	15,8
Italy	69,7	15,1	15,1
Romania	78,3	7,8	13,9
Slovenia	72,3	9,8	17,9
total	73,8	10,1	16,1
STIGMA & PREJUDICE			
People with severe mental illness are always dangerous %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	33,9	43,5	22,6
Italy	23,3	62,4	14,3
Romania	27	64,3	8,7
Slovenia	23,2	58,4	18,4
total	25,2	59	15,8
There is no cure for severe mental disorders %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	9,5	42,8	47,6
Italy	30	29,3	40,6
Romania	18,3	55,6	26,1
Slovenia	17,1	59,4	23,5
total	19,6	49,3	31
ONSET & PREVENTION			
If a friend of mine told me he/she were experiencing psychic distress, I would suggest he/she should talk with someone %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	90,5	1,6	7,9
Italy	90,2	3	6,8
Romania	87,9	8,6	3,4
Slovenia	84,7	6,4	8,9
total	87,4	5,5	7,1
If I had mental problems, I would go to talk to a psychologist %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	58,7	11,1	30,1
Italy	72,9	7,5	19,5
Romania	79,3	6,9	13,8
Slovenia	53,4	12	34,6
total	64,3	9,7	26
I think onset of mental illness can be prevented %			
	True	False	Don't Know
Greece	55,5	4,8	26,9
Italy	20,4	40,9	38,6
Romania	75	6,9	18,1
Slovenia	27	42,9	30
total	45,8	23,5	30,7



People with mental disorders under totalitarian regimes in Europe

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«Mai Più - Memory against Inhumanity: People with Mental Disorders under Totalitarian Regimes in Europe»