

Mental Health in Poland: Challenges, Reform, and Access to Care

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The mental health of Poles has been deteriorating for many years, with a particularly critical situation concerning children and teenagers. Recent events, such as the COVID pandemic and war in Ukraine, have further exacerbated this issue. According to the *Comprehensive survey of the mental health status of the population and its determinants* (EZOP II), eight million Polish people, representing almost 25% of adults, have experienced at least one mental health disorder in their lifetime within the 2016-2020 period. The most prevalent mental health disorders include substance use disorders, anxiety disorders, and depressive disorders. Mental health issues are also associated with psychoactive substance use. In Polish society, the consumption of alcoholic beverages is much more widespread than drug use, with marijuana and hashish being the most used substances among the latter. In response to the growing mental health needs of society, a mental health reform was introduced with the goal of shifting from a hospital-centered approach to community-based psychiatry. As part of this reform, a pilot program for Mental Health Centers (Centra Zdrowia Psychicznego, CZP) was implemented. These centers aim to provide comprehensive healthcare for individuals with mental disorders, offering outpatient, inpatient, day care, hospital, and community-based services. The purpose of this presentation is to share the findings of a report conducted in 2022 on access to mental health services, with a focus on individuals who use psychoactive substances.