

P03-233

JOB STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH MANAGED CARE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AMONG SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE USA

G. Acker

Social Sciences, York College of The City University of New York, New York, USA

This study examined the complex interrelationships among work related stressors associated with managed care mental health services and burnout of social workers. The recent national trends in mental health care in the USA, driven by the rising costs of inpatient treatment have resulted in a reduced psychiatric inpatient census, increase in outpatient clients with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI), new regulations and constraints, and increases in management activities and paperwork. The new economic decisions about mental health care have also resulted in changes in the work roles of social workers as well as other helping professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists), and in new ethical dilemmas, and disillusionment regarding mental health practice. A total of 591 social workers practicing in mental health agencies in New York State completed self-administered and anonymous questionnaire packets that included several measures: Level of conflict that workers experience when interfacing with managed care organizations (CMC), organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intentions. Results showed that CMC had statistically significant correlations with organizational commitment and with emotional exhaustion. The researcher discusses the role of social work schools and other related academic programs as well as agencies in offering new educational opportunities and training in order to improve workers' skills which are necessary for communicating and negotiating with managed care organizations.