



Research report

Major depression in the Era of economic crisis: A replication of a cross-sectional study across Greece

Marina Economou^{a,b,*}, Michael Madianos^c, Lily E. Peppou^a, Athanasios Patelakis^a, Costas N. Stefanis^a^a University Mental Health Research Institute (UMHRI), Athens, Greece^b First Department of Psychiatry, Medical School, University of Athens, Eginition Hospital, Athens, Greece^c Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences, School of Health Sciences, University of Athens, Athens, Greece

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 11 April 2012

Received in revised form

5 August 2012

Accepted 6 August 2012

Available online 30 August 2012

Keywords:

Major depression

Economic crisis

Financial strain

Affective disorders

General population

ABSTRACT

Background: The study endeavoured to gauge the impact of the current economic crisis on the mental health of the Greek population. Particularly, it explored changes in the prevalence rates of major depression between 2008 and 2011, and its link to financial hardship. Furthermore, the study also identified potential predictors of major depression in 2011.

Methods: Two nationwide cross-sectional telephone surveys were conducted in 2008 and 2011 following the same methodology. A random and representative sample of 2.197 and 2.256 people, respectively, participated in the studies. Major depression was assessed with the Structural Clinical Interview, whereas financial strain with the Index of Personal Economic Distress (IPED), an original scale with good psychometric properties.

Results: In 2011, one-month prevalence rate of major depression was found to be 8.2%, as compared to the corresponding rate in 2008, which was 3.3%. Significant increases in prevalence rates were observed for the majority of the population subgroups. A significant association was recorded between major depression and economic hardship. Young people, married persons, individuals with financial distress and people who use medication displayed increased odds of suffering from major depression in 2011.

Limitations: Participants' responses concerning financial difficulties were not confirmed from collateral accounts. Moreover, the direction of causality between financial hardship and major depression is unclear.

Conclusions: The impact of the economic crisis on the mental health of the population is pervasive. Services and clinicians should focus on the primary prevention of major depression as well as on its timely recognition and treatment.

© 2012 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Background

In the epidemiology of mental illness, and especially affective disorders, a growing body of research has concentrated on the social determinants of depression (Craig, 2010). In particular, various studies have demonstrated a link between the prevalence rates of depression and socio-demographic factors, such as gender, marital status and social support (Alonso et al., 2004; Ayso-Mateos et al., 2001; Brown et al., 1986; Marcus et al., 2005; Wilhem et al., 2003). Furthermore, economic variables, such as income, employment and social class, are also associated with depression (Andersen et al., 2009; Lamberg et al., 2010; Zimmerman and Katon, 2005). These have received increased

attention in light of the global economic crisis (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2010; Uutela, 2010; World Health Organization, 2011).

The current economic recession is among the deepest to strike the international community since the Great Depression in the 1930s, with unemployment rates reaching double digits (United States Department of Labor, 2009). Economic hardship, reductions in income, debt, repossession of houses, evictions, job loss and insecurity as well as social disintegration, family disruption and poor quality of life, are all among the adverse ramifications of economic downturn (European Commission, 2009; Higginbottom et al., 1993). These phenomena have been linked to health (Catalano et al., 2011; Economou and Nikolaou, 2008; Marmot, 2009) and mental health problems, and especially to depression (Cifuentes et al., 2008; Hong et al., 2011; Madianos et al., 2011; Sareen et al., 2011; via different avenues (Catalano and Dooley, 1977; Dooley et al., 1981).

After many consecutive years of growth, the Greek economy has gone into reverse. Although in 2008 the Greek economy was regarded as the 27th largest economy of the world by nominal

* Corresponding author at: University Mental Health Research Institute, Anti-Stigma Programme, 2 Soranou tou Efessiou St., Papagou, Athens, Attiki 11567, Greece. Tel.: +302106170821; fax: +302106519796.

E-mail address: antistigma@epipsi.eu (M. Economou).

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with 32,100 USD GDP per capita (Eurostat, 2010), as a corollary of the international financial crisis and the local unrelenting spending, Greek citizens started facing serious socioeconomic turmoil. In 2009, the economic crisis impinged on a greater proportion of the population, whereas in 2010 a Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies was signed in order to avert Greece's default. The same year, national estimates showed that GDP dropped to -3.5% , while unemployment rates reached as high as 14.2% , with 180,000 people losing their jobs (Bank of Greece, 2010). In 2011, the profile of the Greek economy appears the gloomiest of the decade: GDP further declined to -6.1% , whereas unemployment rates increased from 6.6% in May 2008 to 16.6% in May 2011. Concomitantly, throughout the same period, the debt has grown from 105.4% in 2007 to 160.9% of GDP in 2011 (239.4 billion euros to 328.6 billion euros) (Eurostat, 2011; Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011).

In 2008, a nationwide cross-sectional study was conducted in Greece in order to compare its findings with those of the first nationwide prevalence study in the country 30 years ago (Madianos et al., 1993, 1994; Madianos and Stefanis, 1992). In 2009, a replication study was performed on the grounds of the starting economic downturn and the “December riots”, i.e., the beginning of extensive social unrest and street riots resulting in property loss of 2.1 billion euros in Athens area and six other major cities. A comparison in prevalence rates between the two studies demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the prevalence of major depression from 3.3% in 2008 to 6.8% in 2009 (Madianos et al., 2011). However, in 2009 the crisis was not yet instilled in the everyday life of the population and therefore the particular comparison could only capture the instant response to the starting turmoil. As year 2011 was a critical year for the Greek economy and society, with the country being in the throes of economic collapse, a replication study was conducted. The aim of that study was to gauge the impact of the economic crisis on the mental health of the population and to inform policy makers and clinicians on designing effective interventions and treatment plans that would mitigate the health effects of the recession. Consistent with this, the present report sets the following objectives:

- 1) To verify differences between 2008 and 2011 regarding the proportion of the population experiencing financial hardship.
- 2) To investigate differences in the prevalence rates of major depression between the years 2008 and 2011.
- 3) To explore the association between major depression and financial hardship in 2011.
- 4) To identify the predictors of major depression in 2011, so as to inform targeted interventions.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The sampling frame of the present study was the national phone-number databank, providing coverage for the vast majority of households in the country. A random sample of telephone numbers belonging to individuals were selected from the directory. Within each household the person who had their birthday last was selected for an interview, while at least 5 callbacks were allowed.

Telephone interviews were conducted on adults aged 18–69 years old during the same time period (February–April). In 2011, out of the 2,820 calls made, 2,256 were the successfully completed interviews (Response Rate= 80.5%), 203 (7.2%) hung up

immediately and 347 (12.3%) refused to be interviewed or did not complete the interview. The corresponding response rate for 2008 was 73.8% (11% hung up immediately and 15.1% refused to be interviewed or did not complete the interview). No statistically significant differences emerged between participants who were interviewed and those who were not in terms of their gender, age and place of residence.

Regarding the sample composition, it was weighted in accordance to gender, age and place of residence distribution to match the 2001 population census. With a 95% confidence level, the maximum sampling error was $\pm 2.06\%$. In Table 1, the socio-demographic characteristics of the 2008 and 2011 samples are presented, along with the latest population census of 2001. The socio-demographic composition of the samples is comparable and along the lines of the population census.

2.2. Interview

Major depression: For the detection of major depressive episode (MDE), the pertinent module of the Structured Clinical Interview (SCID-I) was used (First et al., 1996). Respondents, who reported experiencing one or both of the two core symptoms of major depression (depressed mood or persistent loss of interest/motivation) for at least two weeks in the previous month, were asked about experiencing seven additional symptoms most of the time during the same time period. Participants recounting at least five symptoms overall, were further asked whether those symptoms made it hard for them to do their work (or university studies), take care of things at home or get along with other people. Moreover, they were asked four additional questions pertaining to the time immediately preceding the onset of symptoms: “Just before this began, were you... (1) physically ill, (2) using any medications (3) drinking/using any street drugs?” and (4) “Did this begin after someone close to you died?”.

Table 1

Sample characteristics, as compared to those of the population census of 2001.

	2008		2011		2001
	N	%	N	%	%
Gender					
Males	1079	49.1	1090	48.3	46.8
Females	1118	50.9	1166	51.7	54.2
Age groups					
< 24	186	8.4	223	9.9	9.2
25–34	400	18.2	426	18.9	19.8
35–44	290	13.2	367	16.3	16.2
45–54	516	23.5	425	18.8	19.4
55–64	413	18.8	368	16.3	16.0
> 65	392	17.8	447	19.8	18.4
Marital status					
Single	377	17.2	455	20.2	21.0
Married	1588	72.7	1585	70.3	70.0
Widowed	129	5.9	138	6.1	7.1
Divorced	87	4.0	78	3.5	3.0
Education (years)					
< 11	1196	54.4	1351	59.9	61.0
12	794	36.1	654	29.0	28.0
> 13	207	13.5	251	11.1	11.0
Place of residence					
Athens greater area	889	40.5	847	37.5	39.3
Thessalonica & Central Macedonia	282	12.8	388	17.2	15.0
Rest of country	1026	46.7	1021	45.3	45.7
Occupation					
Employed	1304	91.0	1214	85.5	94.0
Unemployed	130	9.0	206	14.5	6.0

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4186173>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4186173>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)