

Service Provision in 'the Jungle': Describing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Offered to Residents of the Calais Camp

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Abstract : Background: Existing literature about delivering evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in emergency settings is limited. It is difficult to monitor and evaluate the approach to MHPSS in informal refugee camps such as 'The Jungle' in Calais, where there are multiple service providers and where the majority of providers are volunteers. AIM: To identify experiences of MHPSS delivery by service providers in an informal camp environment in Calais, France and describe MHPSS barriers and opportunities in this type of setting. Method: Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 individuals from different organisations offering MHPSS in Calais and analysed using conventional content analysis. Results: Unsafe, uncertain and unsanitary conditions in the camp meant MHPSS was difficult to implement, and such conditions contributed to the poor mental health of the residents. The majority of MHPSS was offered by volunteers who lacked resources and training, and there was no overall official camp leadership which meant care was poorly coordinated and monitored. Strong relationships existed between volunteers and camp residents, but volunteers felt frustrated that they could not deliver the kind of MHPSS that they felt residents required. Conclusion: While long-term volunteers had built supportive relationships with camp residents, lack of central coordination and leadership of MHPSS services and limited access to trained professionals made implementation of MHPSS problematic. Similarly, the camp lacked the necessary infrastructure to meet residents' basic needs. Formal recognition of the camp, and clear central leadership were identified as necessary steps to improving MHPSS delivery.

Keywords : calais, mental health, refugees, the jungle, MHPSS

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