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In between looking and seeing: recognition, referral and assessment of children and adolescents' mental health problems at the interface of primary care and secondary mental healthcare

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In between

looking and seeing

Recognition, referral and assessment of children and adolescents' mental health problems at the interface of primary care and secondary mental healthcare

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The societal toll and human misery associated with mental health disorders is well established. Nonetheless, only about one in five minors with mental health difficulties access adequate professional support. Care pathways and procedures have to facilitate timely recognition and adequate evaluation of patients' needs to navigate those who can benefit towards 'the right service in the right place, at the right time, and delivered by the right person' - a meaningful Chinese proverb often used by authors from the field of healthcare.

To reach this meaningful goal, professionals should be able to 'look' at a patient and 'see' patients' needs. This by relying on their sufficient knowledge to recognize a probable mental health need, their skills and experience to enquire further, known methods to reliably assess strengths and weaknesses, and readily available resources to translate what they see into an adequate support or management plan.

In this PhD thesis we present a series of studies aimed to fill gaps in empirical knowledge on this topic of recognition, assessment, and referral of youth with mental health problems at the interface of primary care and mental healthcare. The results of the studies could inform clinicians on the status quo considering recognition and referral of minors with mental health problems. Moreover, the findings could serve policy and curriculum makers, thereby improving effective practices in child and adolescent mental healthcare.

In between looking and seeing

