

Cost effectiveness of psychotherapy

Benefits and savings from the use of Psychotherapy in the health care system, social welfare and other sectors or areas

- 20% less costs to health services
- 49% less visits to primary care when clients engage in psychotherapy ⁽⁴⁾
- 2.52 days/person/year reduction in hospitalization rate ⁽⁴⁾
- 75% clients prefer psychotherapy to pharmacology

When someone is experiencing emotional or mental health problems their capacity to live life to the full is usually reduced. This means that in their working life they are unlikely to be able to perform their work to the highest level of which they are capable, and tasks they could normally fulfil effectively cause them stress and anxiety. Their efficiency is reduced, their ability to relate well to colleagues may be affected and their employers will notice differences in their productivity. There may be days of work lost to their ill health and sometimes extended periods of sick leave due to emotional and mental health problems.

The cumulative effect of an estimated 38.3% of the population being affected by emotional and mental health problems.

Psychotherapy is an effective intervention for a wide range of mental health problems in people of all ages; the **average success rate** for treated cases range from **65 to 72%**.⁽¹⁾ There is a benefit for clients who receive effective treatment, and also crucially for the EU there is a cost benefit to the state and the taxpayer due to the relatively low cost / high value structure.

In Europe, only 26% of people who experience mental health problems have been referred to a mental health specialist.

People who experience personality disorders, chronic conditions and severe anxiety or depression disorders are a group that needs psychotherapy, including long-term psychotherapy. It is extremely important that such people receive adequate support. If this does not happen then the costs associated with, for example, sick leave, reduced productivity, frequent outpatient appointments and visits to hospital emergency departments, acquired disability, significantly increase.

There is ample evidence from studies going back 40 years that **individuals, couples and families who participate in Psychotherapy fare better in terms of managing their lives in the short to long term than approximately 75% of people who do not participate in Psychotherapy⁽¹⁾.**

Reduction of costs associated with the overall health care of persons who benefit from psychotherapy

There is also evidence that **people who use psychotherapeutic services use fewer medical services, including hospital services.** In research over a 30 year period it was demonstrated that in **90% of cases surveyed the cost offset was actually greater than the cost of the Psychotherapy provided.⁽²⁾**

Research shows that the **costs** associated with the overall health care of a **person who benefited from psychotherapy were reduced by 17%** compared to those who did not use psychotherapy. In the case of **people not using psychotherapy, the necessary expenditure on health services increased by 12.3%⁽³⁾**(Chiles, Lambert and Hatch 1999, 2002).

Comparing data from the period before the beginning of psychotherapy and after its completion, Golden⁽⁴⁾ noted a **reduction in the frequency of visits to the primary care physicians or family doctors by 49%**. These results also show that the inclusion of psychotherapy in the treatment process of people who very often use medical care reduces hospitalization rate by an average 2.52 days per person.

To give **financial examples of the economic benefits** of Psychotherapy from one country, Poland, a report prepared by the Institute of Healthcare Management in Warsaw demonstrates that in Poland the costs of the treatment of depression amount to 40 million Euros annually, and the costs incurred by the Polish Social Insurance Institution related to this depression amount to 176 million Euros annually. It is important to point out that about 80% of all patients with depression are people at the age of highest economic activity (30-59 years). The financial costs reported in Poland are mirrored in every country of the EU.

In conclusion, it is clear that there are **benefits and savings from the use of Psychotherapy** in the health care system, social welfare and other sectors or areas. Effective intervention in the area of mental health problems should include help and action at the earliest possible stage, including psychotherapy. Additionally, the objectives of Psychotherapy are more than the alleviation of troublesome symptoms. Within the psychotherapeutic relationship the **client has an opportunity to experience more of who they are, increased self-awareness, a greater capacity for self regulation and a more satisfying life.**